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PICTURES

OF

LIFE IN MEXICO.

VOL. II.

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CHAPTER XLI.

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PICTURES OF LIFE

IN

MEXICO.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE ARRIERO, OR CARRIER.

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AWAY over narrow, precipitous mountain roads; down among pleasant valleys; out upon the rocky highways, beside gray and dreary ruins; or in the shade of feathery woods, that border ravines thundering with the roar of cataracts, plods the faithful arriero beside his laden mule. Through misty dells, by long deserted haciendas; passing stacks of oca and charcoal-burners' huts, beside fields

of chilé, near agave plantations. Beneath majestic bananas; through bowers of palm and cocoa trees; by sweet-scented orange groves, hedges of prickly pear, and flowers overhanging beds of water-melons. Now tracking the prairie paths, or threading the broad alamedas; then skirting the banks of lakes, or crossing marshy grounds; passing through sunny towns, enwrapped in afternoon siestas, under the walls of convents and splendid cathedrals, or past adobe houses.—Steadily he plods onward, as cheerful as he is faithful, and patient as the sure-footed mule beside him.

Bandying jest and laugh with the women and children on his route; greeted by miners returning from their work; cross-questioned by the priests at intervals; bullied at the gates of cities; examined by petty officers. Drenched, foot-sore, bespattered with mire; through tornadoes and thunderstorms; in peril from serpents, wild beasts, and robbers; still, he pushes onward. At sunrise, by starlight, through cloudy days, and moonlight nights. By the lair of wolves; by the caves of brigands; past death-crosses on the road; beside the bodies of murdered travellers; startled by

the flocks of wild-fowl which rise to the echo of his footsteps. Mingling among the crowded ferias; delayed by the passing of monkish processions; sharing the hospitality of village homes; dividing the amount of his scanty provisions with his mule; gazing in astonishment and awe upon the ruins of temples erected to the ancient Aztec gods.

Still the arriero urges onward — onward ever! trusty ever! hearty ever! uncomplaining and enduring as the mule, his dumb companion: ever anxious to fulfil his engagement, and to merit the confidence which has been reposed in him.

Now he approaches a deep ravine upon the great Rio del Norte, through which, for several miles, the pent-up stream rushes in rapid torrents. Not even an Indian canoe can pass those deep-sunk streams; and the abyss, viewed by a stranger from its top, is wonderfully magnificent and fearful. The sides of the craggy precipices are in some places almost perpendicular; while in others they overhang, at a tremendous height, the furious current below. Here the river is broad, there it narrows to a rapid rivulet; at one point the rocks appear ready to fall on each other.

further on, they are frightfully rent asunder, and it requires steady nerves and firm footing to approach their overhanging summits with impunity. Such stupendous scenery has great attraction for the traveller, and a lover of Nature might gaze upon it for hours together, in wondering admiration;—the arriero, however, does not yield to the temptation, but casts one curious glance in its direction and turns away;—his mission impels him onward.

But there is something in the shadow of that rock, beside the narrow path, towards which he gazes with a shudder, urging his unconscious mule to a quicker pace. It is a rudely sculptured cross erected upon a small heap of stones, and it marks the spot where the corpse of a murdered arriero was not long ago discovered: there are several other mementos of the same kind in the vicinity. So frequent have the wayside murders been in the mountain-passes and solitary places of this country, that such roads are literally lined with crosses; and on one journey, for a short distance among the mountains, you may count these melancholy memorials of crime by hundreds. Our carrier does well, therefore, to press forward from such a dangerous neighbourhood.

Behold him, on another occasion, on the borders of the tierra templada, where the hot region terminates — near the mountains of Popocatepetl — where such scenery presents itself as can scarcely be equalled, for the strange variety of its features, in any country of the world. Fancy yourself seeking shelter from the heat in a grove of tropical palm-trees, everything around redolent of the warmth of the country, — gorgeous flowers and luscious fruits, lizards and snakes, and a plantation of sugar-canes in the distance, — then turn and look upwards, and a scene as of the depth of winter will meet your eyes. You may look in one direction on the dark, dry, torrid foliage; and at the same time take in for a background the hills of Popocatepetl, covered with pure and lasting snow! While the dewdrops can never hang long upon the trees in the foreground, the sun seems to have no power to effect a change in the appearance of those white masses in the distance! Our arriero, however, only encourages himself with the idea that he is one stage nearer to his journey's end.

And now he has arrived within sight of the glorious valley of Mexico; a scene which has

gladdened and revived many a weary wanderer's heart. There — between mountains nine thousand feet above the level of the sea, and two thousand feet below their summits—is spread out so magnificent a panorama as it is almost impossible to describe without seeming exaggeration. Miles of level land, covered with luxuriant Indian corn, mellowing and waving in the mild breeze, entrance the sight, varied by fields planted with the green, spreading aloes, from which great quantities of pulque and aguardiente are made. Extensive lakes, glittering like shining bands in the radiant sunshine; flowery fields cultivated to feed the colour-producing cochineal insect; and noble rocks, and skirts of volcanic growth, add the charm of variety to the beautiful plain. Then come large tracts of land dedicated to the culture of chilé, or Indian pepper, dotted and interspersed with villages and plantations; the huts of charcoal-burners being indicated by the wreaths of light blue smoke ascending against the shadow of the stately pine-trees. A group of Indian labourers are at work on the wide fields; and a party of muleteers are ascending the hills on our right hand. The splendid capital itself—with its

magnificent churches and cathedrals, spacious squares and well-planned streets, its azoteas and balconied palaces, pleasant gardens and luxurious mansions—is vividly distinct through the pure, bright atmosphere. The view, far as we can see into the softening distance, is bounded by mountains—their rocky forms, cultivated sides, or snowy peaks, rising one behind another, till the dazzled eye can follow them no further. The air around is delightfully clear and bracing; and the azure sky above is exquisitely pure, and sunny, and cloudless.

Now, indeed, the toiling arriero urges forward—for the place to which he is bound is full before him, and soon he will be there. Onward he struggles—onward ever! faithful ever!—patient and persevering as the quiet beast before him.

The transmission of goods throughout Mexico is extremely perilous and uncertain. Merchants can only travel in companies, well armed; and in many parts they must be accompanied by government escorts. Small cargoes of merchandise are entrusted to the arrieros, who are remarkably industrious and trustworthy; and they too sometimes proceed

in parties. Cut off from much communication with the world around them, excepting the information they gain from a few meagre newspapers, the respectable inhabitants of country estates and haciendas generally receive the passing traveller as a welcome guest, for the sake of the news he may be able to communicate. Intelligence from the United States is received in much less time than formerly; but direct news from Europe only arrives monthly. The information of the country newspapers is usually several weeks old; and goes the round of all the journals in turn.

The Mexican mails were formerly, for the most part, carried by Indians on foot; who, to gain time, would venture over difficult paths, through mountain gorges, and on the edge of precipices, where all other means of transport were impracticable. As nothing was entrusted to them but letters, they went unarmed; and the facts of the case being well known to the ladrones, they were allowed to pursue their journeys without molestation. This system of postal communication yet prevails in the more distant and almost impassable portions of the country.

ARRIERO.

The arrieros, as I have said, frequently travel alone. A figure of wild appearance, with matted hair, torn pantaloons, and ragged shirt or blanket — driving a rugged and quaintly-accoutred mule—is often entrusted with some of the most valuable articles of traffic which the country produces. A less trustworthy person, in appearance, it would be difficult to imagine; but as their employment, and even existence, depends on their reputation for honesty, they are deserving of every confidence. Their faithfulness, indefatigable perseverance, constant care, and self-denying endurance, are beyond all praise, and form a remarkable exception to the general character of the Mexican populace.

One bright summer morning, an arriero set out from the city of Chihuahua, with an unusually precious cargo on the back of his mule, including a small quantity of coin, and several bars of silver. Considerable precautions had been taken by his employer; and as secrecy and despatch were necessary in the transmission, he commenced his journey privately, under the impression that his errand and destination were unknown to his acquaintances and comrades.

At the end of the first day, though the road had been rocky and difficult, his progress was considerable; for his spirits were buoyant, his mule was hardy and active, and the strength of both was yet unwearied. He stopped in the evening at a little rancho which was well known to him; it contained but two rooms, and was the only place where it was possible to obtain shelter for many miles. Its owner was an old, solitary Indian, who received him on this occasion with unwonted hospitality; and after partaking of a hasty meal of chilé and frijoles, by a wood fire upon the ground, in the company of the host, and making fast the bridle of his mule to the wall of his own apartment, he retired to his couch—composed of two skins and a blanket—to enjoy a night's repose.

After more than an hour of wakefulness, he was startled by hearing his own name spoken in subdued tones, by more than one person in the next room; where the fire was still burning brightly! Applying his eyes to a crevice in the partition dividing the two apartments, he perceived that the adjoining chamber was occupied by three figures beside the old Indian host; and overheard them planning the readiest way to rob and murder him. The unexpected guests

were léperos, whom he remembered to have seen in the city of Chihuahua—and they must have patiently tracked his footsteps at a distance during his day's journey.

The arriero was well armed, it is true; but resistance against such fearful odds was perfectly out of the question. The only door of his sleeping-place led to the scene of consultation, and it had been secured on the other side; window there was none, and the least noise might be fatal to him: there appeared no means of escape; and time pressed—for it was not likely that the attack of his enemies would be much longer delayed. With the energy of coming despair, he cast his eyes round the room, and to his great joy perceived a slight opening in the thatch that composed the roof. Repressing an exclamation that sprang to his lips, he mounted the slight pile of skins that had composed his pillow, and nervously thrust his hand into the cavity; the thatch yielded to his touch, for it was a mere mixture of reeds and rushes. He breathed more freely, for his escape no longer seemed impossible: but then there were his mule and his treasure. Well! — first securing his own safety, he would put a plan in execution, which hastily

crossed his mind, for the recovery of his baggage.

With the utmost caution, he removed the accumulation of soft and decayed matter from the lower part of the roof; then after examining his weapons, he noiselessly sprang upwards with all his strength, gained the top of the mud and adobé wall, and dropped down on the outside. Taking advantage of the darkness, he then carefully proceeded by the side of the rocks, to a spot with which he was well acquainted—where several paths met, at some distance on the right of the inhospitable hut. Here he paused, and taking a pistol from his belt, fired it without more ado into the air; trusting to attract the attention of his assailants, and draw them from the hut. Nor was he mistaken in his calculation; for ere he had time to regain the rancho by a circuitous route, he had the satisfaction of seeing what he believed to be the whole party scouring the several paths in the distance, to ascertain the cause of such an unlooked-for disturbance of their plans.

On entering the hut, however, he found that the old Indian had been left behind to guard the supposed prisoner and his property; but

this was only a momentary obstruction to his progress. With the speed of lightning he threw himself upon the cowering wretch; and placing one hand on his mouth to stifle his outcries, plunged his cuchillo twice up to the hilt in his back, between the shoulders. Then casting a heap of mats upon the fire to extinguish it, that the ruffians might not have the advantage of its light to guide them back, he unloosed his trusty mule from the wall; and emerging from the hut, drove the animal before him by a track which he had every reason to believe was but little known.

His superior knowledge of the country enabled him, even in the darkness, to make good way from the scene of his past peril; and he used every exertion to place as great a distance as possible between his outwitted enemies and himself. On he sped beside his patient mule, over the mountain-paths, in the dead of night; the man profiting in no slight degree by the fine instinct of the animal, who seemed to understand the emergency, and to strain every limb for the preservation of his master. But even surefooted mules have occasionally been known to take a false step, and our arriero's beast stumbled over a projecting rock,

and fell down a shallow precipice, carrying his master with him. Though the declivity was slight, the fall was yet so heavy that both arriero and mule lay at the bottom stunned and insensible for hours. As it chanced, however, this fall proved the means of their preservation: two of their ruthless and determined enemies had been upon their track, having heard the steps of the mule from a distance, and but for this accident the arriero would have been overtaken.

But their pursuers passed on in the darkness; and returned ere long, under the impression that they had been deceived. The light of morning discovered the arriero and his mule waking and stretching themselves—somewhat bruised, but with no bones broken.

Grateful for his late escape, our muleteer pressed on with fresh vigour—long and toilsome though the stages were—till he arrived in the neighbourhood of the Mexican mountains; then he began to calculate the time when he might expect to arrive at his wished-for destination in the capital.

For a considerable distance that mountain-path abounds in intricate windings, which

render it impossible for the wayfarer to perceive the road very far, either before or behind him. Glancing backwards over his shoulder at one of these points, our arriero perceived a whole herd of wild and heavily armed men hastily approaching. A moment's consideration convinced him that these were ladrones; and their quick movements and threatening gestures sufficiently testified their hostile intention toward himself. On they came with cries and imprecations; calling upon him to stop if he had no wish to find himself at the bottom of the nearest precipice, with a dozen rifle-balls lodged underneath his jerkin.

The arriero's ingenuity and presence of mind here again served him in good stead. Instead of flying from them, or betraying the least fear on their approach, he turned towards the band with a placid countenance, and held up his hands to intimate his satisfaction. He then gave them to understand that he had been anxiously awaiting the arrival of the troop, and would be gratified to share with them the treasures in his possession; that he admired the wild life of the freebooters, and

wished of all things to be admitted into the band.

The bait was swallowed with avidity; the arriero was joyfully accepted as a comrade, and his treasure was hailed as an acquisition to their stores. It was decided, after an animated debate, that the money—being portable, should be placed in the captain's care, for the instant requirements of the troop; but that the bars of silver—being heavy, should remain upon the back of the mule until next day, when they would make arrangements for exchanging them for coin. Then the whole company, elated with the success of their enterprise, proceeded with their new comrade to a secret resort among the mountains, where they passed a night of boisterous carousing: singing, swearing, and quarrelling, as is usual in such scenes of drunkenness and debauchery.

Every member of the band, excepting our brave arriero, fell at length into a state of sodden slumber; he had anticipated such a result, and hastened to take advantage of it: stealthily relieving the captain of the money he had appropriated, he quickly led away his

trusty and still laden mule from the inner cave; and before the dawn of day, was far beyond pursuit. The arriero, ultimately overcoming all difficulties and temptations, landed his precious cargo in safety at its anticipated resting-place.

CHAPTER XXIII.

A FERIA, OR FAIR.

Their characteristics in different districts.—Number of annual fairs.—Chinampas, or floating gardens.—Mexican pedlars.—Sale by measurement.—Juggler and serpent charmer.—Dancing girls.—Perambulating restaurateurs.—Vendors of stolen goods.—Temporary theatres.—Padres and lookers-on.—Pronunciamientos.—An insurrection.

THE characteristics of fairs differ in the various parts of Mexico where they are held; but all partake of the nature of trading, as well as of festive gatherings. In the capital and in its neighbourhood they are more distinguished for luxuries, and the sale of articles belonging to a somewhat advanced stage of civilization, than are most of the others. At Vera Cruz a feria is remembered as a season of wild excess and debauchery among the sailors and people at the port, by a greater profusion of odoriferous articles of clothing in

the streets, and by the increased prevalence of the malaria fever consequent upon the whole. In the mining districts there are fewer fruits, flowers, and vegetable products to be seen, and an infinitely greater display of strong clothing for labourers—coarse blankets, thick leathern pantaloons, and occasionally immense leathern boots, and other mining accoutrements. In the cold parts of the country (tierras frias), a feria is, in a far greater degree, an affair for in-doors; exhibitions in the market-places are rather scanty, and there is a higher relish, if possible, for aguardiente, chilé pepper, and other warm and spicy preparations. While in the tierras calientes, or hot regions, whole floating gardens of resplendent flowers and luscious fruits—fine grapes, rich bananas, and delicious tunas (a superior kind of pear); oranges, pineapples, peaches, and watermelons; granaditas (large sweet gooseberries), apricots, plums, and cherimoyas (a splendid fruit resembling a custard in flavour), together with cooling drinks and sweet mixtures, are abundantly supplied and highly appreciated, as the majority of them well deserve to be.

However different the proceedings at these festive seasons may be in the abstract, their

principal features are still much the same everywhere: there is always a similar influx of petty merchants and retailers to the markets and great thoroughfares; the same recourse to dancing and drinking pulque and ardent spirits; and the same eager abandonment to the absorbing and universal habit of gaming. There are about twelve or fourteen annual fairs held in the chief towns and cities of the republic; they are all well attended; and the traffic of each continues for about a week or ten days. For an average specimen of one of these celebrations, I will select one of the ferias in the capital.

Directly after sunrise, the canals of Chalco and Istacalo presented a gay and animated spectacle: throngs of Indians in boats descending one after the other, with brilliant cargoes of flowers, fruits, and provisions, for sale in the market-places and upon the pavements during the day. A great portion of these flowers and vegetables are grown upon the chinampas or floating gardens—such as we hear of in descriptions of the rivers and canals in China. These constructions are of two kinds, the greater number are attached to the shore, but a few are left to be driven to and

fro at the mercy of the winds. The idea of these gardens may have been derived from masses of flowery and grassy earth carried away from their banks; probably rafts were first formed of soil and reeds intertwining, among which were planted bulbs and roots. These chinampas are guarded by Indians who live in huts in their neighbourhood, and who tow or push them from one place to another by means of long poles. Floating islands of a somewhat similar formation have been discovered in different parts of the world—in Quito and in Italy, as well as in the Celestial Empire.

The pedlars who exhibit their wares for sale beneath the arches have several modes of disposing of their articles, which strike a stranger as especially peculiar. The professed retail-dealers are constantly on the look-out for a fair offer to enable them to sell their whole stock at once. Some among these traders have no other notion of measurement or estimation for their goods, than by the vara, or yard—about thirty-three inches: and the scenes occasionally consequent upon dealing out some of their merchandise in this way, are exceedingly ludicrous. They have ribbons and tapes, and

cottons — printed, bleached, twilled, brown, striped and checked; plain and highly-wrought ponchos and blankets; figured rebosos in cotton and silk—the silk ones in this country being the least valuable; together with trinkets, hats, mirrors, pantaloons, and cutlery. If you purchase a quantity of writing-paper, it will most likely be measured by the vara, and the probabilities are, that you will have a dispute about the manner of doing it—whether by the ream, the quire, or the sheet, and whether the paper should be taken horizontally or perpendicularly! If you bargain for a brace of pocket-knives, you will fall out as to whether they shall be estimated shut or open; if you desire a few rolls of cotton, you know not whether it will be retailed to you folded or unfolded; and if you select an upright mirror, it is impossible to say whether the price to be paid for it will be adjudged by the number of varas, or inches, in its height or breadth!

The stock in trade of the juggler or conjuror, round the corner, is rather startling; for in addition to his sword-swallowing and fire-scattering apparatus, he has a whole budget of minor accessories—chains, boxes,

ropes, knives, wands, and bands; and also a choice collection of beautiful birds and snakes. Occupying a prominent position among the former—at the head of the parrots and parroquets—is a specimen of the celebrated toto, a bird but little larger than a thrush, with wings of the most resplendent green. This little creature, as is well known, is held in superstitious veneration by the Indians, and its destruction was formerly punishable by death among them; but the individual who could capture it and pluck a few feathers from its tail, before setting it again at liberty, was judged fortunate. The serpents in the other cage are for the most part of great length, and most inviting appearance; some shine in green and gold; others appear covered with brilliant pearly scales; while the rest are of a magnificent crimson colour, streaked with black and white. Many of them have been originally of a dangerous character, but their poisonous fangs have been carefully removed, and their proprietor plays all manner of tricks with them with impunity. A gaping crowd have gathered around, who regard him wonderingly as his eyes appear to roll in mortal anguish, when he stabs

himself with a double-jointed knife, or while his flesh creeps and recoils in counterfeit horror from the playful nibblings and twining embraces of his harmless friends the serpents.

In front of a gaming-house, also, the performances of Indian dancing girls attract considerable attention. Some of them are but very scantily draped; but this does not appear at all to offend the numerous bystanders. These girls have been familiar with seasons of want and misery, alternated with scenes of glitter and dissipation, from their infancy. The history of one of them would be pitiable in the extreme. Their joyous laughter and smiling grimaces are evidently assumed: one of them glances with ardently longing eyes towards the dish of frijoles and chilé which has just been borne past; the voice of another seems almost to have failed her from excessive weakness; and a third has been compelled to support herself against a portion of the door, from exhaustion, in the midst of an unusually brilliant feat. But they laugh and sing, and dance and caper—often coarsely, jingling their tambourines and triangles; and the multitudes around care for nothing else,

nor once think of the misery and degradation of the wretched performers.

A woman carrying the furniture of half an eating-house about with her attracts numerous customers, who choose between maize and tortilla-cakes, cups of chocolate and pulque, platters of wild fowl and turkey, eggs, valdivias, and ollas. But the boys of the neighbourhood beset her like flies:—one urchin has just snatched a handful of maize for which he has no intention of paying; and his comrade, who has just run away, has overturned a large jar of pulque! She cannot follow them, for her whole stock of provisions would vanish the while; but she will be avenged by loud outcries and vociferations: already has she discovered their last movements; and a startling torrent of exclamations and invectives electrifies the throng.

Yonder are several groups of ladrones selling their stolen goods, at a rate remarkably under the usual prices—but it is all gain to them. You may know them by their fierce and reckless appearance, and by their downcast and discontented eyes. It cannot be unknown to the police officers and superintendents who guard the fair, that these articles

must have been procured by plunder; yet the knavery is either winked at or deemed unworthy of notice. The eager and designing looks they cast upon the arriero, who is unloading a large bale of merchandise on the right, and the sympathetic glances they interchange with each other from time to time, sufficiently shew their appetite for plunder. They have a great variety of portable and saleable goods, and meet with numerous and ready purchasers.

The assortment of goods belonging to the glass, china, and earthenware merchant, proves to be rather curious on examination. There are some stylish-looking wine-glasses, vases, and decanters—but when you take them up and hold them to the light, you see that every one is chipped as well as cut; and the few china ornaments of attractive shapes and colours are, without exception, either cracked or flawed internally. As for other more common crockery, cups and plates and water-jugs—not one of the whole collection will hold water. The fellow purchased them as refuse, and vends them as perfect; yet if you state an objection to his wares he scowls upon you most fearfully, and his hand is upon his knife in a moment.

A lépero at no great distance is pretending to purchase a cuchillo, or knife, from a dealer in such articles. See how he turns it over, weighs it on his hand, measures it with his fingers, breathes upon it, and tries its strength. He must surely want it for some particular purpose; perhaps he is about to meet a worthy comrade in a hostile encounter, and would like to have the advantage in his weapon. But while the rascal appears to be deliberating about the knife, he is in reality robbing a pannier on the shoulders of an ass behind him, and stealthily conveying his plunder beneath the folds of his serapé; while the proprietor of the ass and panniers, is bargaining for the sale of his fast-decreasing stock—ass and panniers included.

The theatres, at these times, are largely attended; not merely those of the better sort, where plays of European origin are performed, but others, differing in their pretensions; from the red, blue, and green painted edifice that graces an obscure street, to the temporary sheds that are constructed in a hasty manner behind houses and in court-yards especially for the occasion. The one behind us is of the latter kind. The players strut affectedly upon

the narrow boarding in front of the establishment, the tragic heroes scowling and looking down upon their comrades of the comic kind; and the mirth-moving varlets in return playing off their jests and raising the laugh against them:—they all roar, expostulate, and swear, and dance in concert; while a man in an excessively broad-brimmed sombrero, long dagger, prodigious boots, fierce mustachios, and large cane, thunders forth the programme of the performances! "If the Blessed Virgin be willing, the next drama to be set forth will be one of horrifying interest, entitled, 'The Lady of Crime, or the Cardinal Sins'; and the succeeding entertainment will consist of a highly celebrated farce; much distinguished as 'The Spanish Barber, or the Courtships of a Week.'" The comedy is not half so rich as may be witnessed by waiting on the dispenser of indulgences in the huge building hard by; if you are inclined to view the matter in a humorous light; and as to the tragedy, you have only to let your mind recur to the scenes that have been formerly enacted in the same apartment.

Within the numerous balconies in front of the houses opposite, under the brilliantly-

coloured awnings, there are groups of Mexican ladies, of all ages, their handsome features and beaming eyes intent upon the oddities of the scene before them. The elder ladies are most dazzling in point of dress, in their magnificently embroidered, flowered, and laced mantillas, rebosos of all the colours of the rainbow, jewelled zones, gold bracelets, and resplendent necklaces.

On the azotea, or flat roof, of a commodious mansion, are grouped the noble owner and his family, who have come to gaze at the festivities from a secure distance. The lady's father—an aged man—reclines on an easy couch, whence he can enjoy a view of the motley throngs and rich sunshine; the lady herself is in attendance upon him, the children are in raptures with the scene, and their father is making himself agreeable to all. What a happy family party it appears to be! But the father must be careful of those two youngest children, or in their ecstacies of delight, they will precipitate themselves over the parapet, and fall among the busy crowds below.

These Mexican ferias have occasionally been fiercely interrupted; and have sometimes become scenes of the most unexpected and abo-

minable outrage. An instance of this kind, consequent upon the declaration of a pronunciamiento in a certain city of the second class, came to my knowledge.

Pronunciamientos are by no means of unfrequent occurrence. When any officer or general —or indeed any person in this disturbed country—thinks he has induced a faction of the people to act under him in opposition to the existing government, he issues a declaration of dissent and grievances addressed to his followers and to the country at large; and his partisans array themselves immediately under his command. This demonstration of opinion is called a pronunciamiento. The next step—and these proceedings have often been taken together—is to draw up a gecto, or plan of future operations. Then follow war, bloodshed, and plunder, and all the horrors of civil conflict, until one of the contending parties is defeated and subdued; then the vanquished dispronounce, and stipulate for as merciful treatment as can possibly be afforded them; while the victors arrange a triumphal procession and organize a demonstrative glorification.

These pronunciamientos have been very

popular within the last thirty years; there have been many factions of all kinds, some of which have borne British appellations—as the centralists, termed Ecossais, or Scotch, and the federalists, called Yorkinos, or Yorkists; and the number of sanguinary insurrections which have disgraced the country—both before and after the accession of Santa Anna — is fearful.

On the occasion to which I allude, the town fair was brilliant, and numerously attended both by merchants and purchasers; the traffic was at its height, pleasure parties thronged the streets, music and dancing echoed from the pavements, the balconies and azoteas were alive with visitors, gamblers were crowding to their resorts, the sun shone gaily upon the scene, and all was happiness and security. Only one circumstance appeared singular to the thinking portion of the community—a very small one—and this was, that there was not a priest to be seen in any of the streets, while everything was unusually silent in and around the churches. Presently, however, a troop of soldiers under an excited leader, accompanied by a host of tattered and hastily armed depredators entered the town; march-

ing through the principal thoroughfares to the chief square, and bringing with them, in their persons, their own pronunciamiento.

The insurrection was wholly unexpected: so well had the conspiracy been kept, that all ranks of the people were taken by surprise, as the mob took possession of some of the principal buildings, and plundered houses in their progress. Léperos and vagrants in general joined the ranks of the insurgents; and gentlemen whose appearance promised better things, fled precipitately before the throng. Shrieks and cries proceeded from every quarter: women in the crowd were thrown down and trampled upon: market people were either dispersed among their goods, or pressed hastily on in retreat. Stores, sheds, and shops were plundered; stalls and panniers of glass and china, eggs and provisions, silks and cottons, arms and fancy articles, were ransacked or broken to pieces: houses were stormed, and their ornaments destroyed; those belonging to the obnoxious being set on fire. Pillage, dismay, and confusion, reigned paramount in the place where pleasure and business had so lately presided.

A few gentlemen, however, assisted by some respectable merchants and storekeepers, and

joined by a band of pedlars and townspeople, made a brave and determined stand; and the progress of the invading rioters was momentarily checked. Had the numbers of the small resisting party been but augmented by the panic-stricken inhabitants, all might yet, in a great degree, have been spared. But as it was, their bold opposition proved unavailing: the gentlemen at its head were speedily cut to pieces; the police officers and storekeepers fled from the conflict; and many of the poor pedlars and market people who had attempted to defend themselves and their position, were slaughtered beside their merchandise.

This short-lived insurrection, nevertheless, was quelled in a most summary manner by General Santa Anna; and the ostensible leading promulgators of the pronunciamiento were instantly executed by his command.

CHAPTER XXIV.

SEA-PORTS.

Unhealthiness of Mexican ports.—Country round Vera Cruz.—Natural productions.—Harbour of Vera Cruz.—St. Juan de Ulloa.—Rainy season.—City of Vera Cruz.—Commerce of the port-harbour of Tampico.—Surrounding country.—Matamoras.—Acapulco.—San Blas.—Mazatlan.—Port dues and other charges.—Custom-house officers.—Amusing incident.

THE ports of Mexico, as a whole, are low and unhealthy in situation, and but indifferently adapted to their uses. Few persons but those well inured to the climate, whose business or connections imperatively demand their presence, will remain in them on any terms. So fatal to human life are the hot, marshy breezes constantly afloat in their neighbourhood, that the most accustomed inhabitants are often stricken with fever, followed by speedy death; and all who have the means in their power are happy to take refuge, during the hot season, in the more favoured districts at a distance

above them—where the burning sunshine is tempered by the clear air of the hills, and the atmosphere is uncharged by the poisonous particles generated in the vapours of the tropics.

Some portions of the country round Vera Cruz—ascending as they do with the most singular varieties of aspect to the table-land of Perote—are exceedingly rich in vegetable growth and forest trees. Cotton of the finest quality is grown on numerous flat plains; sarsaparilla-root springs up in the declivities of the rocks and mountains; and mezquite trees, with their glutinous pods, may be discovered in the verdant hollows. The pimento-myrtle grows in rich profusion in the forests; cocoa-nut trees are to be found on the open lands; and tobacco is cultivated in considerable quantities in the southern valleys. The odoriferous vanilla clings to the roots of woodland trees; and the jalapæ-convolvulus plants rear their lovely heads in the neighbourhood of some of the villages. The sugar-cane grows in perfection on numerous and highly productive plantations. The scenery of the country in different districts, moreover, is so completely varied, that a traveller may pass from the

heated shores of the Gulf of Mexico, to mountains whose tops are covered with snow, within the short space of four-and-twenty hours.

Vera Cruz, in itself, affords but insufficient harbourage to vessels; nevertheless, its port is the most used of any belonging to the republic. It is more like some point in a channel, where it is just possible for ships to remain on emergency, than a well-appointed harbour; and the anchorage is insecure and uncertain. Northern winds (los nortes) frequently expend their violence upon it for days; driving the vessels ashore, and damaging the protecting mole of the port. The place is well fortified. The Island of Sacrificios, beside which foreign ships of war anchor, is three miles away, and they can only pass through a very narrow channel, commanded by the guns of the fort. The point of land opposite the mole of Vera Cruz (between which projections merchant ships only can anchor, the passage being not more than seven hundred yards wide) is the island of St. Juan de Ulloa, and it is almost entirely taken up by a huge fortress. The Spaniards formerly considered this fortification impregnable, and although a portion of it was blown up by the French in 1839, it still

retains its strength, and cost the Americans a vast amount of trouble in the recent war. On the north-west point of the land, at a considerable elevation, a brilliant and commanding revolving light is stationed,—often serving to remind a stranger from Europe of similar well-remembered beacons on his native coasts.

The rainy season here commences in June, and frequently continues to the end of September. The heat prevailing at this period, and for some time before and after, is insufferable, and awfully pernicious: nor is this the worst; there are a number of large swamps in the neighbourhood of the city, and the suffocating vapours arising from them are even more productive of fever than the heat.

The present city of Vera Cruz does not occupy the same site as the town founded by the first Spanish discoverers; the latter being about six miles distant. The houses of Vera Cruz are lofty and tolerably cleanly; and there are many handsome buildings. The streets are spacious, and, considering the country, are maintained in something resembling a good condition. There is no lack of prosperous inhabitants; the store-keepers and others contriving to realize a huge profit

on their dealings—and many of their habitations are romantic and beautiful. This, however, is only one side of the picture: the neighbourhood immediately adjoining the south side is most forlorn and miserable. Houses and churches are lying in ruins; weeds and parasite plants have overgrown what once were pleasant terraces; and faded and shrunken foliage droops neglectfully over the scene. Fields that ought to be cultivated are covered with rubbish or untended aloe plants; stagnant pools have formed themselves in the various hollows; and tribes of large and bloated insects buzz about your head in the air. It is, all things considered, one of the most unenviable spots in all Mexico to remain in, even for a short time—to say nothing of living there.

The commerce of the port in some articles is considerable. Great quantities of the scented vanilla are transported thence; and half a million of arrobas of sugar (an arroba is 25 lbs.) have passed the harbour in one year. Almost all European merchandise enters the country by Vera Cruz or Tampico. A stage-coach, or diligence, runs occasionally from this city to the capital; but it is often more unsafe to travel in it than with a caravan, so fre-

quently is it stopped and plundered by bands of ladrones.

The harbour of Tampico is nearly as unhealthy as that of Vera Cruz, and more incommodious. There is a bar at the entrance of Boca del Rio, and another at Brazo de Santiago. It is most suitable for brigs and comparatively small vessels, though some of the rivers which flow into it are navigable. The country round Tampico is very fresh and inviting, immediately after the rainy season. There are a number of most picturesque haciendas (farm-houses) at a little distance over the mountains. The road, as you proceed, becomes exceedingly rocky and precipitous; and in some districts the atmosphere is so arid, that animal matter has a tendency to shrink and dry on exposure to it. Nearer the port, however, numerous forests of fine oak trees are to be found; and groves of iron-wood and fustic meet the eye in every direction.

The port of Matamoras is no less than forty miles distant from the town, which contains the custom-house. There are two harbours, one formed by the Rio Bravo del Norte, called Brazo de Santiago, and the other, Boca del Rio: the last-named being nine miles south of

the former. Both are obstructed by bars, which are impassable during a strong gale. The water of the Brazo is generally about ten feet over the bar; and that of Boca del Rio about six feet. As vessels cannot come up the river to the town, in one harbour they unload by means of lighters; and in the other they land their goods on the river banks. The tide has but little fluctuation. The anchorage is tolerable; but there is little security for ships during the fierce winds of August and September. There is no lighthouse; and the pilots of vessels judge of their proximity to the port by the discoloration of the water —a very dangerous and uncertain token during the hours of darkness.

Acapulco is one of the chief Mexican ports on the Pacific. It is so secure and spacious that five hundred ships can lie at anchor within it readily. The larger portion of the town is on the sea-shore, being shut in by lofty hills on almost every side: no wholesome breezes from the interior therefore can approach it, and it is in consequence excessively hot and unhealthy. The noxious vapours from the south-east brood perpetually over the town and port, so that at no period has it been a

well-inhabited district. The land also is exceedingly unproductive, insomuch that the few residents are indebted to inland natives for their meanest articles of consumption. It is said that a fair was formerly held here, on the arrival of certain vessels from China; but this is now abolished. Its chief commercial intercourse, at this time, is with Manilla. There is an island on the south coast, with canals on either side many fathoms deep, which form the two mouths of the harbour. The castle and fort of San Diego, mounted with artillery, is situated on a promontory jutting far out upon the sea, within the distance of a musket-shot.

San Blas and Mazatlan are the remaining principal harbours; and the accommodation at both is of a very inferior description. Mazatlan is the chief calling-point on voyages from China and the Sandwich Islands to Europe and America. It is further distinguished by two different characteristics; first, that its coasts abound with particularly fine oysters and shell-fish, which the natives roast and pickle; and secondly, that its inhabitants, though their number is only five thousand, are composed of an unaccount-

ably strange medley of different races and colours.

The republic of Mexico imposes more enormous dues and charges upon commerce and shipping than any country in the world.

Pilotage-money is exacted from foreign shipping, whether the vessel needs or takes up a pilot, or not.

Ship-papers are immediately handed, on arrival, to a custom-house officer, who gives the captain an acknowledgment for them. The charge for ballast (which is a monopoly in the hands of barge proprietors) is shamefully exorbitant, and presses very heavily on ship-owners and others. No foreign ship is allowed to supply itself with ballast by means of its own boats, on any account.

Assistance given to vessels in distress is too frequently charged for at an enormous rate; and on the west coast of Mexico especially, accidents are often occurring from the scarcity, or total want, of either light-houses, buoys, or moorings. As much as from seventy-five to a hundred pounds, English money, is frequently paid by a foreign vessel for the three items of pilotage, bill of health, and tonnage duty.

The custom-house officers in Mexico are quite as insolent as such officials usually are in other countries; with the addition that they are far more open to bribery and corruption, and are not even then to be depended on by their employers.

An amusing custom-house incident was once related to me, as having happened during the occupation of the country by the Spaniards, many years ago.

A party of Spanish merchants were on their way from the city of Mexico to Vera Cruz, with the intention of embarking at that port on a return voyage to Europe. They had been successful in their commercial transactions, and were journeying to the eastward much richer men than, many months before, they had entered the country by the same route. Pleasant images of their cherished Spain, and the friends they had there left behind, thronged upon their minds; and it is not strange, as they proceeded in anticipation of soon returning thither, that lively exclamations and cheery jests—such dignified humour as a Spaniard may be supposed to countenance on joyous occasions—should have been exchanged among them. Animated conversation

and hopeful expectation, therefore, quickened their eager footsteps, and kept time with the tinkling of their mules' bells as they hastened on.

There was one man of the troop, however—a certain Don Surillo—who appeared to take but little interest in the self-satisfied demonstrations of his comrades; in fact, he seemed to regard the company generally with something like contempt. As he happened to be a paunchy, mean-looking personage, this conduct produced some astonishment in the minds of his fellow-travellers. They could not make it out at all! That this man should affect to be so reserved and haughty, when they were evidently disposed to unbend a little to each other—it was a perfect mystery! However, as he persevered in his demeanour, they became inclined to regard him—in spite of his appearance—as a superior kind of person, gifted with an unusually strong mind and great intelligence. Nevertheless, two or three members of the party determined to keep their eye upon him, and paid him the utmost attention accordingly. They listened attentively for any tokens of conversation on his part; watching him keenly for any signs of abating rigour in his eye or the corners of his mouth

—in vain. They questioned him of his intentions and destination—nothing could they learn: of his friends and kindred—there was no reply. The Spaniards are universally a grave people; but this man was awfully grave: his aspect was heavy and portentous, as though the cares of nothing less than an empire weighed upon his brow.

There was one circumstance about this strong-minded personage, however, that they could not avoid noticing, for it was repeated on all occasions. Wherever they happened to halt on their journey—whether it was at a painted hotel or a roadside hut, a despicable rancho or a common fonda—he invariably ordered, for his own refreshment, turkey—always turkey. It was amusing to note the gusto and luscious longing with which the grave man smacked his lips over his favourite bird—to see how he yearned towards his one weakness, on all occasions, and in the most difficult circumstances, was ludicrous in the extreme. They had at last discovered the key-note of his character—the secret spring which animated him. It was turkey! Turkey roasted, turkey stewed, turkey boiled;—he lived only for turkey! Its yielding fibres

and succulent juices possessed him as with one idea.

The grave man had some singularly shaped packages, too, in his possession, beside his complement of baggage; packages which had caused considerable speculation among his companions. They were not round, neither were they oval, nor were they quite square; but they were made of wicker-work, externally at least, and they had a slight canvass covering. What could they contain? Not merchandize or gold—they were too light; not provisions—for he never opened them; not wine — for they were not secure; not clothing—for his apparel was in a box by itself: yet he strapped them to the back of a mule with great care. At length, one of the most curious of his fellow-travellers took advantage of his absence at a meal, to raise the canvass covering of one of the packages; he uplifted the lid, with some trouble, and looked within. There was nothing. He lifted up the cover of the other, raised the lid, and peeped into that. After all his conjectures and anticipations, he was grieved to find that both the bulky hampers contained —nothing.

On the following morning they reached Vera Cruz in safety; and as every member of the party was anxious to take ship immediately—as well to avoid the risk of remaining on that feverish coast as to return to Europe forthwith—they agreed, if possible, to sail all together, in a Spanish vessel then lying in the harbour. The grave man was one of the number, and it was remarked, as the time for embarkation approached, that he was unusually active and business-like in making his preparations.

The day at last arrived, when the company of merchants were to pass the custom-house with their goods; every man was there with his permit, his bales, his trunks, and his boxes, not excepting Don Surillo himself. The officers, attended by other officials with lances and swords, overhauled the bales and thoroughly ransacked the boxes. The report was made; all was right: there was nothing contraband. They were free of the port, after paying certain duties; and might take possession of their berths in the ship immediately.

Suddenly it was discovered that the grave Don has absented himself, though his goods

have been examined too. Mysterious man! Presently he appears, carrying the mysterious packages in his hand; and advancing courteously to the chief officer, he whispers something in his ear. The official, however, evidently mistrusts him, and disregards his representations. The Don persists in urging his request, and endeavours to soothe the suspicions of the officer by the most earnest appeals and solemn assurances. His comrades are only able to hear these words of the colloquy,—"I wish my friends to know nothing about it." Believing he had gained his point, he glides past the official and his satellites, and blandly attempts to make good his exit, packages in hand. But the officer arrests his progress with a loud "Ave Maria! Stop that man!" an attendant soldier rushes quickly after him; and by way of effectually preventing his further progress, buries the sharp end of his long lance in the middle of one of the mysterious hampers.

This is no sooner done, than the most dismal screams and cries issue from beneath the wicker-work, interspersed with groans and chuckles! The soldier, horror-stricken, in vain endeavours to draw out

his lance from the struggling mass. The soldier pulls and swears, the grave man raves and tugs at the soldier's arm, the spectators are all astonishment, and the officer darts wildly to the rescue. Meantime, the place resounds with horrid screams, short breathings, and hoarse chuckles.

"Dios Mario! Pablo! I will not have them meddled with!" exclaims Don Surillo.

"I insist on examining these hampers," replies the officer.

The hampers are examined accordingly; and on opening the wicker-work he straightway produces—the bleeding body of a newly-killed turkey, spitted as neatly on the end of the lance as if it had been before a fire! Then he draws out another turkey—alive, but pierced through the wing; a third takes the opportunity of leaping forth, though with hobbling gait, and shelters itself behind the booted feet of the soldiers; while a fourth is forcibly kept down by the officer, in its attempts to force its passage through the wicker-work to the light of day!

No words can adequately describe the rage and indignation of the grave man at this exhibition; for it was touching him upon a tender

point. The gaping astonishment of the soldier on perceiving the novel applicatien of his weapon, the struggles of the chief official to preserve his dignity, and the unrestrained laughter of the merchants and bystanders, combined to make the whole scene irresistibly ludicrous.

The soldiers at the custom-house made an excellent dinner that day on the spitted turkeys. As to Don Surillo, though he recovered the greater part of his sea-going treasures, he never would forgive the people at the port, nor his friends, for their enjoyment of the affair. Yet during the voyage often did he console himself with his favourite dish; still did the unctuous moisture trickle from his lips in its presence; still the burden of his contemplations was turkey ever—always turkey.

CHAPTER XXV.

CITIES AND PROVINCES.

Valley of Mexico.—Lakes.—Principal Roads.—Old City of Tenochtitlan.—New City.—City of Mexico.—Puebla.—Xalapa.—Perote.—Gueretaro.—Guanajuato.—Zacatecas.—Durango.—Santa Fé.—Caneles.—Tamazula.—Cuernavoca.—Cuautla.—Yucatan.—Tabasco.—Chiapa.—Vera Paz.

THE Valley of Mexico, or Tenochtitlan, is of oval form, and is situated in the centre of the cordillera of Anahuac, on the ridge of the basaltic and porphyritical mountains rising from the south-south-east to the north-north-west. It has five lakes—those of Tezcuco (near which lies the city of Mexico), Chalco, Xochimilco, Zampango, and Xaltocan. Tezcuco, one of the two great lakes, being of salt water.

Six principal roads cross the mountains which enclose this valley—the old road of La Puebla, by the Llanos de Apan and San Bonaventura; that of Pachuco by the Cerro

Ventoso, to the mines of del Monte, through scenes of beautiful vegetation; the way of Toluca, by Lerma and Tianguillo—a fine artificial causeway partly raised on arches; that of Queretaro, Guanajuato, and Durango, by Guantitlan, Huehuetoca, and Peurto de Reyes, through gently-rising hills; the road from Acapulco, by the summit La Cruz del Marques, to Guchilaque and Cuernavoca; and the way of La Peubla by Rio Frio and Tesmelucos, from the Cerro del Telapon, in connection with that from the Sierra Nevada to the great volcano Popocatepetl.

The old city of Tenochtitlan was divided into four quarters called Xochimilco, Atzacualco, Mayotla, and Cuepopan. These divisions are still recognised in the present city of Mexico in the quarters St. Paul, St. Sebastian, St. John, and St. Mary; and the streets run much in the same direction as did the ancient ones.

The new city is situated on the same site as the former, between the extremities of the lakes Tezcuco and Xochimilco. The town was of yore separated from the continent by the waters of Tezcuco, communicating with it by dikes and causeways; but those briny streams

having receded to the distance of nearly 15,000 feet from the centre of the city, the intervening ground consists of pretty chinampas and saline marshes, dotted with pools of mud and flocks of wild fowl. The citizens at present derive their fresh water, by means of canals, from the Lake of Xochimilco.

The city of Mexico presents a fine appearance. Its situation, and the character of the surrounding scenery, are most imposing. The suburban roads are lined with splendid trees; and large tracts of land are devoted to the culture of fruit-trees and flowers. The principal streets are broad and well paved, and run in straight lines, with intersecting squares. The houses are frequently built of hewn stone—tetzontli, or porphyry; and are erected round patios, or court-yards. Lodges, offices, and coach-houses are on the ground-floor; next comes the story occupied by the domestics; and the upper rooms are the best and most fashionable, the principal saloon being often about thirty or forty feet in length. The windows are gaily balconied and draped; and the azoteas, or flat roofs, afford pleasant retreats in the cool of the evening. The population of the city is estimated at about 130,000.

Puebla is considered the second city of the republic. It is open, cleanly, and pleasant: the streets are as well paved as those of the capital, and less crowded with beggars. House rents are one-third, nay, often one-half less than in the chief city. Churches and convents flourish here in great numbers; and the neighbourhood is also celebrated for its productions in glass and earthenware. On the eastern side is a beautiful Alameda, or public walk, planted with rows of fine trees, behind which flows a pretty river, supplying in its course water-power for several manufactories.

The town of Xalapa and its vicinity, constitute the garden of the country. It is most romantically situated, the houses being perched upon the crests of lofty hills, and the streets forming a kind of intervening valleys. So salubrious is the locality, that residents upon low lands adjoining the coast, resort to it as a refuge from the malaria fever, during the hot season. The lovely freshness and greenness prevailing here, is caused by the damp atmosphere driven inland from the sea to rest upon the town; and the dewy, rainbow-like mist, followed immediately by the most dazzling sunshine—reflecting itself a hundredfold from

the glistening earth and foliage—have together the most superb effect imaginable; and are more striking still from the suddenness and completeness of their changes. The houses in Xalapa are more comfortable and better furnished than in almost any other district of Mexico: the walls and ceilings are often pleasingly decorated, and the apartments, though low, have a cheerful aspect.

The inhabitants number 11,000. The general tone of society is above the average in the country: there are fewer beggars in the streets, the Indian population is not so wretched, and virtue and religion are held in somewhat higher respect. The ladies of Xalapa are celebrated throughout the land for their beauty, in such wild poetry and song as have survived the shock of revolutions, and the degradations of war and superstition. Their features are well shaped, their complexions rosy, and their eyes fine and lustrous; their manners are refined, their dispositions pleasing; and, upon the whole, they furnish as favourable a specimen of the female character as can be found in Mexico.

Perote is a small town on the road from

Xalapa to Puebla, containing between 2,000 and 3,000 inhabitants. The dwellings are chiefly of only one low story, strongly built; and the town is well supplied with fresh water from the elevated grounds beside it. The country around is rugged and hilly, interspersed with dreary moors and hollow chasms; and the people are, for the most part, as wild and uncouth as the features of the scenery.

Gueretaro, on the road northwards, is a cotton-manufacturing city, containing 10,000 inhabitants, and celebrated as the birthplace of a numerous family of pronunciamientos. The population are remarkably ignorant, and the place literally swarms with priests and soldiers.

Guanajuato is famous for its silver-mines, the working of which was formerly profitable in the extreme; but the better part of the ore has been obtained, and the city is now comparatively deserted in consequence.

Zacatecas is a still more celebrated northern mining town, situated among silver-producing mountains. Its streets are narrow, crooked, and precipitous; churches and religious shows are very numerous, although the lower class

of residents are very dishonest and barbarous. Frisnillo and Sombrereto are also famed for their valuable silver-mines.

Durango is the principal city in the region of the north: it boasts of a mint, is the seat of a bishopric, and has a splendid cathedral. The Inquisition had formerly a vast and terrible establishment in this city, the buildings of which frown upon the landscape, in all their original sternness. The Alameda—situated beside the "Plaza de los Toros," or bull-ring—is one of the loveliest in Mexico; it is ornamented with plentiful flowers and trees, and cooled by a brilliant fountain. Durango is supposed to occupy almost as much ground as the city of Mexico itself; though it contains scarcely more than 20,000 inhabitants. Jesus-Maria and Chihuahua are also considerable localities in the mining districts of northern Mexico.

Santa Fé is the capital of New Mexico, distant only fifteen miles from the great Rio del Norte. The town is poorly arranged, small, and confined; and its buildings, with the exceptions of the palacio, the custom-house, and the barracks, are even unusually humble and inconvenient. The population of

the city, together with several villages in the suburbs, amounts to about 6,000.

Caneles is a mining town in the direction of the Pacific. Its mountains abound in silver-ore, but it is of so poor a quality that the shafts have never been extensively worked. An English mercury-mining company, however, have carried on their operations there. The streets of the town are poor and narrow, but the neighbourhood is beautifully verdant with all manner of fruit trees; and the climate is most delightful.

Tamazula is a small town on the same river as Caneles. Culiacan and Cosala are towns of some little importance in the same vicinity. Guadaloupe de Calvo, also, is a city containing about 10,000 people. It was partially built by the English, who established and formerly conducted extensive silver-mines in its neighbourhood. The sash-windows made by the English, may still be seen in the walls of certain habitations in this town.

Cuernavoca is built in the valley of that name, in the tierra caliente; notable for the beauty of the tropical scenery around it, and for the wretchedness of the Indian habitations composing its suburbs. Several stages nearer

to the Valley of Mexico is Cuautla; the houses of which city are small but cleanly; and the inhabitants good-humoured and lazy. The country adjoining abounds in sugar plantations, haciendas, and luxuriant forests; and swarms with miserable Indian labourers. Ayotla (near the mountains of Popocatepetl) and Tenango, are two of the concluding stages on the road to Mexico in this direction.

The peninsula of Yucatan is a province of Mexico, but its situation is too isolated to be very dependent, either commercially or politically, upon the republican government. It is bounded by Vera Paz, by Chiapa, and by Tabasco. The climate is hot, and the ground hard, but productive. It furnishes cotton, wax, honey, cochineal, and valuable trees; and amber is to be found on the coast. Ancient Indian ruins and other curiosities have been discovered in this region; but few attempts have yet been made to cultivate either the country or the people.

The territory of Tabasco lies low and open. The district produces many fruits of the finest quality, and timber trees of the greatest value. It is exceedingly subject to hurricanes and storms, and is very unhealthy.

The province of Chiapa abounds in pine and cypress woods, and cedar and walnut trees; others also flourish, from which are derived liquid amber, copal, tacomaca balsams, and aromatic gums. Maize and cochineal also flourish in abundance; together with pigs and beautiful birds, sheep and snakes, goats and horses, leopards and wild boars. The city of Chiapa contains a cathedral and a monastery: but it has been for many years in a declining state, notwithstanding.

Vera Paz is a rugged and broken, but very fertile region. It is subject to awful tempests of thunder and lightning, winds and earthquakes. Amber, gum-trees, and immense canes, together with fine fruits, may be met with in abundance everywhere; and many wild animals—tigers, bears, serpents, wild-boars, monkeys, porcupines, squirrels and cats, with eagles, sea-crows, bitterns, storks, humming-birds, and parrots, may be observed constantly ranging the wilderness woods, or bounding over the thirsty plains, in every season of the year.

I have thus briefly characterized the principal towns, cities, and provinces, of the Republic. An exceedingly great proportion of

the latter are still unexplored and uncultivated, and but thinly inhabited at the best: —and any very lengthened description of the former would be tedious—so similar are the main features of many of the smaller places, to those of their larger and more interesting prototypes.

CHAPTER XXVI.

INDEPENDENT MEXICANS.

National pride.—Patronising manners.—Drunken independence.—A swaggering postilion.—Braggadocio and abasement.—The adventures of an intoxicated family group.

ONE feature of the Mexican character obtrudes itself forcibly upon the attention of a foreign resident, at an early stage of his experiences —their braggart pride, and lofty assertion of personal independence. You will seldom encounter a Mexican at all removed from the lowest grade, who has not such an overwhelming idea of his own grandeur and importance, that he will admit of superiority in no shape or form. If you meet him on equal terms, and desire to enter into conversation, he immediately gives you to perceive that he patronizes you. Employ him in the meanest capacity—whether he waits upon you at table, feeds your mule, or furnishes you with boots,

spurs, or wearing apparel, and you remunerate him fourfold—he is still your patron.

Confer an obligation upon him, or put yourself to inconvenience to serve him, still he patronizes you; and his acceptance of your kindness is a condescension. Nay, I verily believe, that if you were to save his life at the peril of your own, he would even then patronize you, and account you his debtor that he did you the honour to allow his life to be saved!

This peculiarity, however, is more whimsical than offensive; for no affront is intended by it. But there is, however, a kind of drunken independence—if I may be allowed the expression—in which an ignorant mind is apt to clothe itself as with a garment, whenever the body is prostrated by intoxication. I do not consider the Mexicans generally an intemperate people; but their favourite liquors, drunk to excess, have as powerful an effect upon them as more fiery alcohol has on the natives of other countries: and when a Mexican of the patronizing stamp has his natural independence augmented by his potations, he is a remarkable specimen of human nature indeed—sometimes very dis-

agreeable, but often excessively whimsical and diverting.

Of an exhibition of these two qualities in happy unison, I was unexpectedly a witness, at a public room adjoining a fonda, to which I had gone for my usual evening meal of mutton, frijoles, and tortilla-cakes.

A good-looking postilion was standing—or rather drooping, with a swaying motion of the body—at one of the side tables, in the midst of a group of boon companions, who were profiting by his generosity; for he was treating them to divers cups of aguardiente—at his own cost. He was in the condition I have named: a very impersonation of patronage, he lorded it over his comrades with mock-majestic mien and out-stretched hand; his head rolled from side to side in an important manner; his eyes glared fiercely and brightly from under his slightly-raised eyebrows—his long hair was pushed backwards on his shoulders—and he appeared to have appropriated the whole of the conversation to himself.

His dress and entire accoutrements also partook of the portentous swagger and solemn joviality of the man: his broad sombrero was set smartly on one side of his cranium; but

its dignity was marred by the ragged appearance of the crown, which had started up from the other parts from the effect of some cruel crush it had received: the scarlet handkerchief beneath it, too, would have looked attractive, only that it partially hung in shreds down to his waist behind. His finely embroidered shirt was wofully stained and bespattered with mud and liquor; stray tufts of straw were visible from the pockets of his smart, round jacket; the bells, which usually added such a charming finish to his lower garments, were, for the most part, flattened or incomplete; and his spurs!—Holy Virgin! were it possible to arouse and sober him by any earthly consideration, it would have been the soiled state in which his spurs—those jewels of his heart—were to be seen at that moment!

The chief points of his discourse appeared to relate to those subjects of his patronage—his employers. No words can adequately depict the oracular majesty of his speech, or the braggadocio of his manner, as he delivered himself of his opinions.

"The Señor and Señora who employed him," he said, "were utterly unworthy of his services: they were no better than himself;

and some people whom he could name"—here he winked upon his companions—"assured him they were not half so good. Then why should he serve them, and wear their clothing? He had often told them he should quit their service and be his own master; and now, then, he would do it. Why should he be dependent upon them for the food he ate? He would bear it no longer, but would demand a pension for his services, and retire, and employ a postilion of his own. He was acquainted with their secrets; and if they denied him his request, he would make public a few little matters that they would give any money to conceal, he was sure!"

The poor postilion rambled on after this fashion for some time, and lashed himself and his independent opinions into such a fury, that he madly tore the hat and handkerchief from his head, and the bells from his inexpressibles, and dashed them indignantly against the wall of the apartment.

Ere long, however, his violence seemed exhausted, and a revulsion of feeling took place. Conscience, it was evident, began to accuse him; and he became as cringing and abject, as he had been elevated and uproarious; and

his speech, when he resumed it—which he did in mild extenuation—afforded the strongest possible contrast to his former boastfulness.

"Had he said anything disrespectful? Queen of Heaven! nothing was further from his intentions than to say anything disrespectful. He believed he had said nothing which could possibly be construed into anything disrespectful. Especially of the good and dear Cavallero and his lady who employed him; he would not say anything disrespectful for the world! Again he hoped that he had not said anything disrespectful?"

He now proceeded, in his humility, to poke his face close to the countenance of every individual round him, and inquire from each in turn, if he had given utterance to anything disrespectful? And each assured him with the utmost promptitude (for they were drinking his aguardiente at the moment) that he had done nothing of the kind.

All but one man—a little fellow on short allowance of drapery—upon whom drink was beginning to have the same effect as it had previously had on the postilion. This individual stoutly contended that the other had been disrespectful,—very,—and a violent

quarrel was the result. The little man was wofully beaten and punished before he would relinquish his point; and the postilion was thrust into the street by the late recipients of his bounty—bleeding and wounded, minus hat, bells, and scarlet handkerchief; his clothes hanging in miserable shreds and tatters about his person.

A yet more grotesque assertion of this independence shewed itself on another occasion, as I was travelling from the city of Puebla to the town of Perote, in the company of a small caravan of pedlars, guards, and carriers.

We had arrived within three hours riding from the latter place. It was early in the evening, and very hot; so as we had the remainder of the day before us, we allowed our animals to take their own time in carrying us to our journey's end. Proceeding very leisurely, therefore, we were overtaken by a man mounted upon a sorry mule, and a female with a child, who walked in a faltering and hesitating manner beside him. They had come from one of the little villages on our right hand, and were anxious to reach Perote before nightfall. They were both intoxicated; and the female produced a small coin—I could not see the amount—to secure

the protection of the troop for herself and family.

The first act of this worthy trio, was for the man to inform the company "that his name was Zarios—Señor Zarios—that the lady near him was his wife, and that the child was their son; and furthermore, that they were proceeding on a little social visit to some particular friends of theirs in Perote." I never saw a more comical expression of drunken gravity, than his face assumed as he favoured us with these particulars; and the wonder was, considering his tottering motion, that he contrived to keep upon the back of his mule from one moment to another.

In the next place, both the lady and her husband took upon themselves to declare, patronisingly, that they were well acquainted with every individual of the party. They had seen us all before, many times, and were gratified to see us looking so well! Could we tell them how the health of Friar Rosen was? and whether his secular assistant was a chosen vessel of the Virgin? Also whether old Pedro Quonce was still alive? and if Aliza had not left the barber's? Ha! they had had many friends in their time; and had some still.

Yes; they were going to pay a little social visit, then, to some particular friends of theirs, in Perote!"

The stammering grandeur of their manner, and their familiar questions to persons who had never set eyes upon them before, afforded no little diversion to the troop; yet it had no effect in moderating the garrulity and condescending patronage of Señor Zarios and his buxom dame.

They then introduced their hopeful son and heir to the notice of the company. "Was there such another child to be found anywhere? Was he not beautiful?—a fit subject to dedicate to the service of Our Lady herself? He was so sweet-tempered, and not at all tired of walking yet; when he was, he should ride beside his father. They were very fond of him, and so were their friends. They were, even then, on their way to pay a little social visit to some particular friends of theirs in Perote!"

What must the lady do the next moment—in her misty apprehension of things—but mistake me, mounted upon my little pony, for her husband! She stumbled up to me, and began to pinch my elbows and knees, in a playful man-

ner, humorously inserting her fingers between my ribs, at short intervals, by way of variety. As I did not respond to these affectionate endearments, however, she laid her hand so heavily on my shoulder, as almost to upset me as well as my gravity, and bawled into my ear, "I have paid for our protection, love! Do not look so downcast, for we shall soon be with our friends at Perote!" Then she pinched my arms and knees and sides again, and hung about the neck of my pony; so that for some time I was unable to assure her of her mistake, and to convince her that I was not indeed her liege lord and master.

By-and-bye Señor and Señora Zarios began to perceive that the favours of their conversation were lavished upon indifferent and unworthy auditors; for a kind of horse-laugh was the only reward generally bestowed upon their attentions. Their dignity became aroused, and their patronizing and independent spirit speedily found other ways of venting itself. They were now excessively solemn and unyielding; and jogged on together in offended silence, a little in advance of the irreverent company.

Amused by their indignant bearing, we

halted to refresh our animals before sunset. And now their high spirit urged them to shew their independence of us in the strongest manner. "They would do no such thing as wait; not they! They would go on without us!" So, much to their own satisfaction, and amid the unrestrained laughter of our party, they left us behind; the woman and her son riding, and Señor Zarios staggering on, in his old imposing manner, close behind.

As we approached the walls of the town, at dusk, some of our troop thought they could see a mule lying on the ground, to our left, with one figure or more hanging over him as he lay. We drew nearer to the spot, and the true state of the case presented itself to our view.

I must say it was with a grim satisfaction that I beheld, not only the mule, but Señor Zarios himself, lying forlornly helpless and bedraggled, in a pool of slime and mud; into which they had strayed, ignoring the proper path. There they floundered as they might have done in a comic dance; the mud rising in the richest profusion at every movement, till it seemed likely that both man and animal would soon be covered over. The mule kicked

Señor Zarios, and Señor Zarios kicked the mule; while the lady and her little boy struggled wildly to release them, tugging first at one limb and then at another, and screaming loudly to aid their endeavours. "And this," thought I, "is the party who were proceeding to pay a little social visit to some particular friends of theirs, in Perote!"

We assisted the woe-begone, well-assorted couple to their feet; yet, as we did so, Señor Zarios, stupid and unconscious, muttered words of patronage and independence. But, by this time, some friends whom he had not expected, arrived upon the scene; and bore him and his good lady away with them, to share their quiet hospitality.

Need I add that their evening's entertainment took place in a strongly-guarded reception-room; and that their hosts on the occasion were the police-officers from the town-gates.

CHAPTER XXVII.

INCIDENT AT A PUEBLO.

Story of an old alcalde.—Life in an isolated hamlet.—Indian cattle-stealers.—The savages' revenge.—The padre and his household.—Terrible storm.—Hacienda set on fire by Indians.—Horrible slaughter.—Escape of prisoners.

I ONCE prevailed upon an old gentleman with a benevolent countenance, shining locks of white hair, and a belief in predestination, who resided at the same meson as myself, to favour me with the particulars of his past history; it was a sufficiently varied one, and may serve to illustrate a wild phase of Mexican life, such as residents in remote districts are to this day continually exposed to.

"I have no doubt, my child" (this was his favourite mode of address to all younger than himself), "that you have heard some mysterious reports about me," he said. "Perhaps you may have heard that the old alcalde is re-

garded as an alien and an intruder, residing here without a carta del seguridad" (the card of safety, or permit, granted by the government); "and that I, a quiet, feeble old man, am more than half suspected by the underlings in authority to be a spy upon their administration. But it was predestined: all is predestined, believe me! And now you shall hear the truth.

"It was ordained that I should be a kind of petty governor of a distant district in the neighbourhood of Zonoma, where many years of my life were spent. I lived most happily in the midst of my domestic circle, for I had a beloved wife and interesting little family. I had nothing to do among the residents of the settlement but to superintend my own hacienda (or farm), and in my own way to administer such justice—it was not much—as was required. Ah! those were indeed happy days—days of sunlight and prosperity. Our cattle and horses were healthy and abundant—Heaven smiled upon our labours; and the earth richly rewarded the little pains we bestowed upon its cultivation. Our only fears arose from the liability of the pueblo (hamlet) to be attacked and robbed by the Indians;

and against this we were constantly on our guard. I had always treated them kindly, as the Virgin is witness; but treachery is their appropriate element: it is their very nature to steal—doubtless their destiny, poor creatures! and they could not help it.

"Father Pablo—a priest, whose arrival in the neighbourhood occurred shortly after my own—acted as resident priestly missionary to the pueblo: he too had a household, and a happy one; and so it might have continued, but for his avarice and ambition. Although his estate was considerable, he was continually grasping to enlarge it; and he increased his stock of cattle and horses proportionably: so rapidly did his responsibilities multiply, that at length, when one or two of his domestics fell sick, he had not sufficient herdsmen to keep his cattle and stock of all kinds properly together.

"His growing wealth and fancied security offered an undue temptation to the Indians; and, in an unlucky hour, they planned a descent upon his property. One bright moonlight night the padre was aroused by an unusual noise on the premises, and looking out, he was just in time to behold a great number

of his best cattle disappearing in the distance, marshalled by a company of stealthy savages. The owner was not the man to suffer this robbery with impunity; so, alarming nearly the whole district, and placing himself at the head of some chosen followers, he sallied forth before the dawn of morning in the direction the plunderers had taken. By the middle of the day he had overtaken, engaged, defeated them, and recovered his missing property; which he brought back in triumph—though several of the Indians were wounded, and two killed in the skirmish.

"Had this been all, we should have had no very great reason to complain; but the Indians —in obedience to the laws of their pre-ordained nature—were revengeful. And though we heard nothing more of them for some time, yet on the very earliest occasion when Father Pablo was absent, they returned in greater numbers, laid a great part of his domain in ruins, and, not content with driving away nearly the whole of his horses and cattle, they carried off his wife and three children in addition. This was a terrible blow to the Padre; for he had been much attached to his wife and family: especially to the youngest, a fine boy,

his favourite child. The deprivation seemed to change his very nature, and to make him like the ravenous beasts. Arming himself, and pressing every available person and weapon into his service, he once more set out upon their track. The encounter that ensued was short, fierce, and decisive; and it ended in the holy father recovering his family and stock: with the exception of his favourite child, who had been killed by an old Indian in revenge for the loss of his son. Three of our people were wounded in addition; many of the offending savages were slain, and seven of them were captured.

"These the padre ruthlessly ordered to be shot, and the command was carried into effect.—for it was one of the things that were to be. On his return, he made arrangements for disposing of his stock and farm; and immediately quitted the district, taking up his residence in the capital. He hired a house in the Plaza Mayor, where for many years—so changed had he become—he led the life of a tyrant to his family. He had always disliked his female companion since she had been carried off by the Indians; and the distaste had extended to her children, now that his favourite boy was

no more. It was my fate, however, to suffer in the greatest degree from these untoward circumstances; for the Indians made a horrible reprisal upon the remaining residents for the loss of their comrades.

"Oh! how distinctly do the events of that night dwell in my remembrance. A terrible storm, accompanied with thunder and lightning, had visited us during the evening: a perfect hurricane! The rushing wind blew in such tremendous gusts, that trees were torn up by their roots, and borne away; many of our sheds were totally unroofed, and the rain descended in such torrents upon the cattle within, that the water rose to their knees as they stood; while the vivid flashes of lightning, breaking from time to time through the growing darkness, affrighted them almost to madness. As the storm continued, things became but little better in-doors; for many parts of our habitation threatened to give way; and the women and children raised their cries and lamentations, in unison with the howling of the winds, the bellowing of the cattle, and the pelting of the rain. For two hours, the war without raged thus violently; and when, at length, it began to subside, we found it neces-

sary to visit the outbuildings, to make some temporary arrangements for security and comfort till the following day; so that it was not until a very late hour of the night that the members of our household, as well as those of our neighbours, could obtain repose.

"I was awoke from an hour's feverish slumber by a loud knocking at the door of my chamber. I hastily rose on hearing a voice I well knew, and unfastened it immediately; when a confidential servant entered, and almost sinking on the floor, exclaimed, 'The savages have returned in greater force that ever! Oh! Señor, we are lost! They have surrounded the buildings, and are at this moment preparing to set fire to them!'

"I hastened to the window and looked out. The news was but too true: building after building echoed to the most horrible whoops and yells; clouds of smoke arose from every quarter; and already a dreadful hissing and crashing sound could be distinguished. My heart sank within me, my head drooped upon the ledge of the window at which I stooped, and for a moment I lost my consciousness.

"I was aroused by the grasp of a heavy hand upon my shoulder; and as by this time

the flames without rendered objects in the apartment indistinctly visible, I thought it was my servant. 'Juan,' said I, abstractedly, 'collect all the arms in the house: we will not surrender our lives without at least an effort!'

"'The Alcalde!' exclaimed a deep voice behind me, and at the same instant the hand tightened on my throat with sudden ferocity, 'The Alcalde! The Alcalde!'

"Turning round in the extremity of suffocation, I saw that a tall and powerful Indian was behind me, and that, while his right hand was grasping my throat with determined energy, the other was fumbling about for a knife that had fallen on the ground. Before he could regain his weapon, I sprang up, madly striving to free myself from his hold; and a desperate struggle for existence ensued between us. We tugged, and strained, and fought: but his strength held out longer than mine; and, utterly powerless, I was just on the point of yielding, when my adversary's grasp suddenly relaxed, and he staggered and fell. Much to my surprise, I perceived that he had been stabbed from behind by my wife; who, recovering from her first stupor of fear, had

courageously hastened to my rescue in time to save me. Snatching up the children, we rushed out as the flames began to gather round us: but we were seized by a party of our enemies in waiting below; our hands were tied, and we were dragged to the spot where the majority of our friends and neighbours were lying, in the same condition as ourselves.

"The flames behind us had by this time spread far and wide. The houses had taken fire from the out-buildings, from thence it had communicated with a group of noble trees at no great distance; and as these stood at the entrance of a deep wood, it seemed impossible to conjecture where the conflagration would end. The sight of the flames mounting and crackling, lighting up the pitchy darkness for miles around, was awful in the extreme: yet we were too much absorbed in the contemplation of our approaching fate, to pay it much attention. We were, not, however, kept long in suspense.

"Oh! the cruel ruin of that night! Oh! that it should have been so predestined! Alas! my poor wife and children! how could I survive you, murdered in cold blood before

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my face! For the next act of our inhuman captors was to form the prisoners into two divisions; then, placing all the old men, women, and children together in a group, they put them to death without remorse. The survivors, consisting of myself and the most able-bodied of the men, they intended to carry away with them as prisoners.

"For three days and nights we were carefully bound and watched, and were obliged to accompany the Indians as they leisurely drove our cattle before them. On the fourth day, however, one of our number contrived, with the assistance of a tree, privately to loosen the cord that bound his hands; and patiently awaiting for night, was fortunately able to render the same service to a few of his companions. I was one of the number.

"When our enemies had stretched themselves upon their blankets for the night, we found means, after much scheming, effectually to silence the guard before he was able to give the alarm, and so managed to make good our escape. After innumerable fatigues, dangers, and privations, and with the loss of one of our comrades, we reached the capital; and here I have since been living in great obscurity, and

almost utter solitude. I was old when these misfortunes came upon me; alas! how much older has grief made me since that time! And when I tell you that I am *not* absolutely poor; that my wants are few; and that I am as contented as it is likely I can ever be in this world, you are in possession of nearly my whole history—such as it was pre-ordained to be."

Thus runs a translation of the old alcalde's narrative, word for word, as he related it to me.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

MEXICAN HACIENDAS, OR FARMS.

Character of scenery.—State of agriculture.—Fences, implements, and crops.—A hacienda.—The agave, or maguey plant.—Mode of obtaining pulque.—The Vaquero, or cow-herd.—A lazy brute and his canine companion.—Seeking stray sheep.

In such a country as Mexico, it is in vain to look for the rural beauty and tranquillity of more favoured countries. Rich as are the soil and climate, the most frequent aspect of the scenery is wild and desolate; and as the soil needs but small attention and cultivation, the little that it does demand has been withheld. Dense and teeming forests—where the branches of trees are interlaced, herbage grows rank and unrestrained, and flowers are borne down by their own abundance—present themselves on the one hand; while on the other, whole tracts of country are neglected—lands which, with the slightest care, might produce an

endless abundance: beds of hardened land, covered with layers of soil and rubbish, and miles of undulating upland and valley, which ought to be duly ploughed and sown with wheat and Indian corn, are all waste and useless. Indeed, it is seldom that the eye can rest upon a spot where the evidences of care and cultivation are visible. The most magnificent and entrancing prospects are to be found occasionally; but they owe everything to nature, and nothing to man. We gaze with wonder and untiring admiration upon the beauteous works of God; but when we view the rich landscapes in connection with the prosperity and advancement of mankind, our thoughts find no response, and we turn from the prospect with a feeling of unmingled sadness.

The spots most resembling the old familiar scenes in England, are to be found surrounding the better class of haciendas, or plantation and agave farms, in some of the more rural neighbourhoods.

Agriculture is in a lamentably backward state, at present, in Mexico. Many portions of the country require to be irrigated from time to time, the rainy season not continuing long enough to produce sufficient moisture beneath

the surface of the more arid regions. Fair and promising crops have absolutely withered away, because the shallow streams in their vicinity have dried up; and as the constitution and habits of the people are opposed to all innovation in the shape of improvement, in many instances no provision whatever is made for irrigation. In some districts, certainly, there are large drains or ditches (acequias), from which individual farmers are allowed to form minor drains and reservoirs; but too often the former are allowed to remain out of repair, and the latter are wholly unused.

The elevated plains in the temperate region afford excellent grazing lands; for though the ground is occasionally too dry for agricultural purposes, it produces remarkably fine, nutritious grass. This grama is most valuable immediately after the rainy season; it is frequently left on the ground to become hay during the winter, in which state it supplies the earth with abundant food, without the trouble of having it cut and stacked. Stacks of oca, or fodder, are often to be seen in the vicinity of the farm-houses; but as a rule, little provision of this kind is cared for.

Mud fences and walls of adobé bricks are

sometimes to be observed in place of other divisions on the fields; more commonly, however, there are no enclosures at all; consequently, the owners of cattle and horses are compelled to employ herdsmen, to prevent them from encroaching on the crops and lands of their neighbours.

Agricultural implements are miserably rude and inefficient. Their wooden ploughs are usually shaped out of the trunk of a tree, cut into handles; the ploughshare being merely a wooden projection sloping downwards; while the yoke consists of a flat beam, to which the oxen are secured. The hoe, of uncouth manufacture, and frequently containing little or no iron, is the article most in use upon the lands. Thus are the people condemned, by their indolent spirit, to throw up the soil from the first in a slow and unsatisfactory manner, on account of the unserviceable nature of their most indispensable instruments of cultivation.

Pure vegetable and farinaceous productions are neither very various nor extensive in this country. Indian corn and wheat are the recognised staple articles of the latter class; and in some soils two or three crops are realized in one year. Frijoles, or small beans,

are grown extensively. Chilé pepper is cultivated on numerous large tracts of land. The wild potato, of small size, appears in some districts, but its nurture has been generally neglected. Onions (xonacatl), artichokes (tagarninas), water-cresses, gourds, sorrel, and haricots (ayacotli), are all cultivated in great quantities. Among productions of the soil of another kind, must be mentioned the agave, or maguey, upon the culture of which great care and much time are bestowed, as it furnishes the national drinks. Cotton also must be named, though it is not grown to a tithe of the extent which the country would admit. A species of wild flax is to be found in abundance at the bases of many mountains, yet no attempts are made to rear it. Tobacco, though cultivated in considerable quantities in a few districts, does not occupy a portion of the attention which might profitably be devoted to it. Sugar plantations are to be encountered in some fine neighbourhoods; they are most numerous on the plains in the direction of the Pacific. Bees'-wax is produced in great quantities, and its consumption, in the shape of church candles, is enormous. But the most flourishing production of the country,

perhaps, is the banana tree; its fruit is so abundant and massive, that a field only capable of producing thirty pounds of wheat, would yield three or four thousand pounds weight of food, if planted with the banana or plantain.

Numerous haciendas throughout the republic, which were at first only single farm-houses, have become miniature villages and hamlets, composed of a number of habitations of different grades. This is one effect of the unsafe and uncertain state of society in the country.

The traveller may occasionally observe a favourable specimen of one of these haciendas before him, as he descends the rugged mountain paths so frequently to be encountered on his way. Perhaps it may be in the bosom of a verdant hollow, enclosed on all sides by hills. The walls of the principal buildings will most likely be of a particoloured admixture—here a dash of red, and there a wall of white. Small huts will probably surround the larger erections, where the Indian labourers on the estate reside. Sugar plantations may be seen in the background, of a productive quality, and kept in better order than ordinary. The landscape

altogether is of a very attractive character; the surface of the soil is rich and varied; and a look of prosperity and happiness pervades the whole. He will meet with a hearty welcome on his arrival on the grounds; and if he wishes to survey the various arrangements, they will be cheerfully exhibited to him. He will be led through storehouses and kitchens, to inspect boilers and pressing machines, cooling vats and moulding-rooms, where birds in cages are kept about the walls, and every one appears to be employed and contented. This, however, is a very favourable specimen indeed of such establishments.

The peculiar and important culture of the maguey plant demands a somewhat more lengthened account.

The agave or maguey plant—said to flower in some countries only once in a century—blossoms on good soil in this country once every five years. Toluca and Cholula are the districts most celebrated for its cultivation. Two of the most extensive national drinks are distilled from it—the pulque, and aguardiente or mexical; it yields a great quantity of sugar; and its fibre has been made into flax, and sometimes paper; for the ancient Aztecs painted

their hieroglyphics upon paper made from it. The singular process of extracting its juices, however, yet remains to be told.

The greatest possible care and deliberation are employed to ascertain when a maguey has arrived at its period of flowering; for it will die if any mistake be made in this respect. The object of the proprietor is then to obtain the juice, which in the course of nature would nourish and supply the large and numerous flowers. To this end, an incision is cautiously made in the stem, on the very earliest indication of forthcoming blossoms: first, the central leaves are slit; then the opening is gradually enlarged, taking care, meantime, to tie it securely on the outside with leaves and hemp; and in this artificial receptacle the whole abundant juices of the plant collect. The sweet fluid continues to form in this manner for from two to three months, and this wonderful natural fountain may be tapped by the attendants three or four times a day.

Eight quarts of pulque are frequently derived from this singular plant in one day; three of which are obtained at sunrise, two at mid-day, and three more in the evening. The root of this shrub is unusually strong and tenacious;

so that the plant is hardy, although the stem perishes after the period of flowering. A number of new sprouts speedily spring up from the old stock; for no vegetable product thrives more generously than the maguey. The fermented juice has an agreeable, sweet, yet acid taste; and in three or four days it is nearly ready for use. To assist the process of fermentation, the natives add a little old pulque of an acid quality. This drink has a peculiarly strong scent; but when a stranger has become habituated to this, the flavour is a rather pleasant one. The pulque and aguardiente are—if we except atole—the most favoured and universal beverages in use in Mexico; pulque being a light, thin drink, and aguardiente a strong distillation, nearly as intoxicating as brandy.

It is not surprising, then, that this unique vegetable spring should be highly valued throughout the republic; and become an article of commerce in itself, as well as the juices that are continually being fermented from its stem.

The vaquero, or cow-herd, of a farming hacienda, is a human sloth—an impersonation of sluggishness—living in such a state of un-

consciousness of all necessities, that the idea of labour in any shape—even standing, thinking, seeing, or eating—is a burden. He is a creature who would hug himself—were it not too much trouble—upon his very vacancy: upon his seeming non-existence.

There he reclines at full length, in the shade of yon huge plantain tree; the immense shadows of whose branches, cast by the sunlight on the ground, have often changed their shape and place since the morning hour; but the place and posture of the vaquero, since then, have changed not, save for the purpose of lazily doling out from his pouch some fruits and nuts for his own eating: nor is he likely to arouse himself before the shades of evening gather upon the landscape.

It is the business of the vaquero to preserve the sheep and cattle under his charge from straying and making inroads upon the unprotected vegetable and grazing lands of other proprietors; but as the animals are almost as indolent as himself—lying as they do, blinking and sleeping in the more shady parts of the field—his occupation is a very light one, and he trains himself to follow it with only one eye, and that but partially open.

Behold the boor as he breathes heavily and sonorously upon the ground! Every limb seems relaxed with laziness; his hands are partly closed—for it would be labour to hold the fingers extended; his knees are turned to rest upon the earth—for to bear their own weight would be impossible; his mouth hangs open—for it would require exertion to keep it closed, and at present it assists his breathing. His eyes are shut—except the business one, which half opens with difficulty from time to time. His head, bushy with thick masses of tangled hair, is bowed upon his breast; his hat is placed forward on his forehead; his serapé is folded beneath his head; his pantaloons are unbuttoned at the waist; and his boots are almost off—for the confinement of clothing would interfere with his ease and enjoyment.

It required the application of the whip this morning at the hacienda, to rouse him from his nightly slumbers, and it is only the fear of the whip that induces him to bear an eye to his important duties at present. The whip darkens the quiet sunshine of his existence always; for without that, his portion in the world would be too blissful for humanity. He is not incapable of exertion, however; but the

evening hour, when all is cool, is the proper time to exercise it—then, after he has girded up his loins and escorted his charges to their resting-place, for the night—when he is cosily seated by the furnace-side in the servant's room of the farm—his feats in bolting the tortilla cakes, and clearing the mutton platters are astounding: empty cups and pots of stew attest his energy, and his attentions to the pans of frijoles and chilé, and his exertions in swallowing draughts of pulque and atole, are most laborious.

What cares he, meanwhile, for republics or empires, pronunciamientos or rebellions? War or treason, courtly luxuries or mercantile disasters, are as nought to him. Allow him his shadowy resting-place and luxurious ease, his ragged serapé and battered sombrero, his savoury supper and straw couch o' nights, and let the world go on as it pleases! He knows no want, and he desires no change. What animal could ever wish for greater happiness?

He has a companion by his side also, nearly as gloriously idle as himself—a dog who looks very like a wolf, for his colour and outline are of that savage kind. He winks and slumbers

like his master, sometimes in the shade, and at others in the sun, and has the same fear of the whip before his eyes. They are a worthy couple; very much alike in every respect.

Alas! for the height of human or canine felicity here below; even the waking dreams of a vaquero and his four-footed comrade are liable to disturbance.

Presently the dog begins to open his eyes, growl, and stretch his legs, and the man, on hearing the well-known signal, betrays unwonted signs of returning animation. When dog and man have gained their feet, their demeanour assumes a strangely different appearance; the dog is all noise and irritability, and the man all bustle and activity. Several sheep in the distance, having left the main body and strayed out of bounds, are greedily nibbling the rich green frijoles in a field belonging to a neighbouring farmer!

A sweltering race has that poor vaquero to run, over the fields in the burning sunshine, after the missing sheep. He holloas, pulls up his pantaloons, perspires, and raves, and calls upon Our Lady, as he manœuvres to get on the other side of the wanderers by the nearest way; yet the truant animals appear

obdurate to his advances. The dog leaps and yells, and, being indifferently trained to this part of his duty, frightens the sheep away, instead of driving them in. At length, however, the offenders are secured in their old quarters; the dog is left in charge; and the vaquero retires once more to his shade beneath the plaintain, conscious that he has earned a lengthened and grateful repose.

CHAPTER XXIX.

A PLANTATION ANECDOTE.

Culture of tobacco.—A plantation.—Processes at a tobacco factory.—Rival planters.—Malicious dilapidation.—Destructive reprisal.—Duel between the rival proprietors.

ALTHOUGH tobacco is not cultivated to a great extent in Mexico, flourishing plantations may be occasionally found, especially on the table-lands of Anahuac; and were due attention but given to the subject, its growth and exportation might prove a considerable source of wealth to this republic, in its difficulties.

A tobacco plantation is frequently a hot and busy scene. Dark men, almost entirely divested of clothing, may be seen stooping over the dreary-looking plants; clearing away any dust or damaged leaves that may have gathered about them, watering them in the most careful manner, and tending them in many particulars, almost as if they were children.

A tobacco factory, however, is a still busier and more interesting sight. The plants are gathered and stowed into hogsheads; layers of leaves, and often even single leaves, are separated from each other; then they are re-arranged into fresh layers, and sorted according to their qualities; next sprinkled with the juice of liquorice; and pressed and arranged over and over again, until they are judged ready for shipment and sale.

Two planters, to the west of Vera Cruz, had sedulously conducted their estates and business transactions in the spirit of the most violent opposition for a long period. The rules of their establishments, the growth and treatment of tobacco, the prices of their cargoes, the choice of markets, and tricks of competition and sale, had each afforded sufficient grounds for continued variance and bitterness. If one of them discovered a new and profitable market, the other was sure to make a rush in the direction with reduced prices. Had the former contrived some new arrangement, either in producing or bargaining, the other was certain to puff off his own commodities by its aid. In fact, their spirit of rivalry had for years been so strong, that the interests of both

parties had suffered in a great degree in consequence.

The animosity of the owners had extended, as is generally the case, to the servants and labourers employed on the plantations. Demonstrations of defiance and opposition had been often exchanged between the hostile parties: many were the petty annoyances to which each band had subjected the other; and many a hand-to-hand fight and general skirmish had taken place, in assertion of stated rights, and defence of doubtful privileges.

On one particular occasion, the Indians employed upon the plantation called "Naqua" perceived, on entering a field after sunrise, that a number of the finest tobacco plants had been cut down in the night, and their leaves, which were fast approaching maturity, recklessly cast to the four winds. Several vats and vessels containing water had also been broken, and their contents wasted, so that the remaining shrubs would sustain injury from lack of moisture. Three of the sheds, used for drying and sorting tobacco, had been sadly abused and delapidated; and to crown the whole, the watery contents of a couple of large cisterns had been set afloat, to saturate a quan-

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tity of the best hogsheads lying in the store-room.

It was at once evident that these things could only have been effected by their enemies of the rival plantation. All thoughts of labour, therefore, were set aside for the day; and a council of war was immediately held, to judge of the steps to be taken under such provoking circumstances. Messages were despatched to acquaint the owner—who resided at a little distance—with the facts of the case. A few of the overseers, and the cooler portion of the labourers, were for awaiting his arrival and decision; but a body of the more impetuous marshalled themselves in array, and hurried off in great force to revenge their insults on the opposite estate, and its labourers, without delay.

They approached the place in silence; but, as they came within sight of the main allotment, they observed a small body of guardians stationed beside it, as if expecting them. The sight raised their indignation; and they at once vented their outraged feelings in an unanimous whoop of defiance, which was responded to in a similar manner by their enemies on the watch. The besiegers rushed

fiercely upon them, and after a brief but brisk engagement, carried all before them—the numbers of the defending party being totally inadequate to offer an effectual resistance. Elated with their victory, and stung by remembrance of the ruin they had beheld on their own plantation, they proceeded to take summary vengeance, by ransacking and destroying everything upon which they could possibly lay their hands. They trampled down whole beds of flourishing plants, and cut up many others, root and branch; overturned great piles of leaves which were arranged on shelves and tables to dry, and immersed them in a narrow stream of water flowing through the estate. They forced open hogsheads of tobacco ready for shipment, tearing the wooden staves and bands apart, and scattering their contents on the earth on every side; unroofed and pulled down a number of slightly-built sheds and store-rooms; and destroyed or appropriated every needful utensil which they were able to discover on the premises. In a word, so complete was the ruin, that within half an hour after the first appearance of the Naquaians, little remained to indicate the uses of the place; and little probability existed

of its ever again being brought into effective operation as a tobacco plantation.

During the interval, however, the besieged party had been running hither and thither to collect their scattered forces; and now, with the owner of the estate as their leader, they advanced with bitter animosity and fierce impatience, against the invaders. A second and a longer continued engagement was the result. The former had armed themselves with hoes, and poles, and rakes, while a few had produced knives and old muskets; their opponents being provided with similar weapons from the first. They fell upon each other headlong; poles, and hoes, and bludgeons flew into the air, and alighted on the heads and shoulders of enraged combatants; and broken heads, loud execrations, bleeding limbs, and impatient groans became the order of the day. Several worthy belligerents lay upon the ground, wounded and overpowered; and much serious mischief would, doubtless, have been done, only that the muskets were all but useless; and the arms that wielded the bludgeons—belonging to Mexican Indians and half-castes—were none of the strongest.

While the affray was yet at its height, a

horseman rode hastily in the direction of the contending parties. It was the proprietor of the Naqua plantation; and his appearance seemed to infuse new vigour into the ranks of his devoted labourers. He made his way immediately to the leader of the opposite party; and calling upon both classes of combatants to desist, he demanded a parley for mutual satisfaction.

For a short time, the rival planters entered into conversation, for the ostensible purpose of bringing matters to an amicable conclusion. Both gentlemen, however, were too inflammable and exasperated to listen either to reason or argument; and, as neither would yield in the least to the other, nothing came of the consultation, beyond a number of alleged grievances, and a volley of the most abusive epithets.

"If I am a thieving lépero," exclaimed the first, "thou art a blood-sucking zopilote —always buzzing over the concerns of thy neighbour, to prey on his destruction."

"Dog of a tobacco swindler, I defy thee!" was the prompt reply.

"Wretch of an alacran, I fear not thy sting!" exclaimed the other.

"Thou art a malignant demon, unfit to be turned loose!" vociferated the Naquaian.

"Thou art a wicked fiend, fresh from purgatory!" was the rejoinder of his adversary.

As may be readily conjectured, such pleasant observations could only be introductory to blows—and blows and thrusts soon came of them, accordingly. They were both armed with knives; and, in a few minutes, the Naquaian contrived to plunge his weapon with such effect into the right arm of the other, that he was unable to continue the engagement upon any terms. The labourers belonging to the assailed plantation, seeing their leader defeated and wounded, beat a speedy retreat, bearing his bleeding person in the midst, and leaving the elated Naquaians undisputed masters of the field.

So effectually was the aggressive plantation maltreated and destroyed by its incensed visitors, that it subsequently became worthless; and its owner disposed of it for a trifling sum, soon after recovering from his wound. And to this day the Naqua tobacco-estate remains without a rival in its immediate vicinity.

CHAPTER XXX.

WILD-CATTLE HUNTERS.

Dexterity in lassoing.—Cattle-hunters' fare.—Defence of wild-cattle against wolves.—Inducements to hunters.—Departure for a cargo of hides.—Sunset on the prairie.—The hunter's terrible dream.—A perilous position.—Combat and retreat.—Struggle in the water.—Safe deliverance.

THE use of the lasso in many parts of Mexico has almost become a science, so dexterous are the people in its management, and so unfailing, generally, is their aim. The wild-cattle hunters of the prairies have only to come within hailing distance of a herd, to select the finest and the best, and to consider them as certainly their prey, as if their hides were already laid on the backs of their horses, and their fat melted into barrels for sale. These hunters often proceed in large parties; and, in this manner, vast numbers of cattle

are captured—many hundreds being often destroyed during a single expedition. Sometimes small bands of these herd despoilers will issue forth, while, not unfrequently, one or two hunters set out alone, to do a little business on their own account; none favouring them with any commands in the matter, and none, on the other hand, participating in their gains.

There is nothing so mysterious about this art of lassoing, however, as has been occasionally represented. The requisite skill and delicacy (for there is actual delicacy of handling in it) have to be acquired by slow degrees and continual practice; many a mortifying mistake, caused by too great quickness or too much deliberation, has to be endured by the tyro; and in this profession, as in every other, there are some who are never destined to shine.

The life passed by these hunters is a wild and singular one: oftentimes shut out by vast tracts of country from the comforts of home, and everything approaching the refinements of civilization, it is as "rough and ready" an existence as can well be imagined. Trusting most frequently, as they do, to the issue

of their day's adventures for the supply of their daily food, brisk exercise and free air combine to give them most voracious appetites; and they are not very nice in their mode of gratifying them—a huge steak or joint from a recently slain ox, broiled with the hide upon it, upon an *impromptu* wood and earthen fire, affording them a ready and substantial meal. Sometimes a little maize, or hard tortilla cake, is added to this; but more commonly is it partaken of without any such accompaniments. The bare and rugged earth supplies them with an ample couch, upon which they sleep undisturbed by dreams or nightmare—unless it happen that the wolves in the neighbourhood are unusually bold and hungry; while their only covering is the canopy of heaven—unless there be a tree, or grove of trees, in the vicinity: not a very usual occurrence there.

The wild-cattle themselves are a shaggy set of independent, impulsive, roving blades. There is something absolutely comical in the mixture of innocence and suspicion, of fierceness and vacancy, observable in their countenances. They are sociable together, too, and fair in their conduct to one another; each

keeping to his particular knoll of herbage—when it is in plenty—without molesting his neighbour. When grass grows scarce, however, fierce looks are often exchanged, eyes glare, horns are lowered, tails are elevated, bellowings rend the air, stubborn hides are pierced, and blood flows upon the ground. These bisons are of smaller size than those which roam the prairies of more northerly America: they have somewhat lean bodies, short horns, squat faces, long tails, and a prodigious quantity of hair upon their shoulders.

Their most formidable enemies, after the hunters, are the wolves, so common in Mexico. These fierce but cowardly beasts are of medium size, and of a peculiar reddish shade of colour; they frequently follow herds of cattle in immense gangs, for days together, running to the right and left, and howling,—only awaiting an opportunity to rush upon them in an unguarded moment. It is an impressive spectacle in the prairies, especially in the silence of night, after listening to the confused tramp of many feet in the distance, interspersed with bellowing roars and savage yells, to behold the dark forms of a herd of cattle advancing at slow

and measured pace, with a troop of their adversaries following stealthily and sulkily close behind, eager for the slaughter, but half afraid to commence the attack. The wild cattle, however, have a bold and intelligent manner of defending themselves from the assault of their obstreperous foes. On the alarm of their near advance, they quickly form themselves into a circular or oval phalanx; presenting their fronts, bristling with horns, in every direction to the invaders. It has been said also, that in these arrangements, the aged and incapable are placed in the centre, for protection. However this may be, the foremost of the assailants are sure of encountering a very sharp reception, for the cattle catch them dexterously on their horns, and toss them, maimed or killed outright, into the air. But the unequal engagement cannot last long; for while the wolves are receiving the reward of their presumption, a number of undefended points are unavoidably exposed in the hitherto impenetrable host. These inlets are speedily taken advantage of by other wolves, who fasten upon the sides and limbs of their victims, and are not to be shaken off. The result usually is, that a goodly number of the

unoffending herd become the prey of their cruel and dastardly enemies.

The inducements presented to the cattle-hunters for the destruction of these animals consist in the hides, which form a considerable article of commerce; and in the fat, which they melt down into vessels and hogsheads, also for sale.

"Thy blessing, holy father!" exclaimed one of these hunters, to a priest located in one of the northern villages,—"thy blessing, holy father, and that of Our Lady on my expedition. I am about to set out that I may reach the 'red point' of the prairie at sunset, to be ready for the morning. I have promised Zio a whole cargo of hides—as many as my horse will carry—in two days from this. Grant thy benediction then, holy father, upon my journey!"

The priest muttered some words over him in an incongruous mixture of the Latin and Spanish languages; and the hunter immediately commenced his journey in the highest possible spirits, and with the fullest certainty that his expedition would be happy and productive.

Urging his horse to its utmost speed, he

arrived within sight of the prairie before sunset; and by the time that luminary was sinking on the verge of the horizon, he had reached the spot indicated.

The Red Point was the name given to a spot where the soil was of an extremely ruddy colour; and as the sun now cast its last burning rays upon the earth, the glowing appearance was heightened, insomuch that it might have been mistaken at first sight for a sheet of water reflecting the gorgeous atmosphere above. Our traveller gazed for a little while on the scene before him; not that he could appreciate its beauty, but he was endeavouring to calculate from its aspect, the degree of to-morrow's heat. He then slowly turned his eyes in the direction of the east, then towards the north, then towards the west again, taking in every object between himself and the horizon in his range. Apparently satisfied with his observations, he walked his horse to a slight hollow at a little distance, containing three trees, and tied the animal to the trunk of one of them; then as the darkness came on, he proceeded to select a grassy nook within a few paces of the tree, and after refreshing himself and horse, laid him down to rest. Deep sleep

overtook him as the stars above appeared in their accustomed places, and the scene, which had lately been so glaring, became enwrapped in the cool and quiet lustre of a tropical night.

He slept soundly for several hours; dreaming about his home in the village, and the expectant wife he had left behind. Next his thoughts recurred to Zio the dealer, to whom he had promised a goodly number of hides within the space of two days. Then he dreamed of the priestly father, of whom he had a great dread, and of his parting benediction on his journey: he thought, in his vision, that the priest was before him, and gazed upon him; that as he gazed, his aspect changed, and he regarded him with the most dreadful sternness—accusing him of forgetting his evening prayers and Aves before lying down to sleep upon that spot. The priest's aspect grew more and more severe; his countenance became more terrible, and his voice louder and harsher than before; finally, he stood over him and cursed him with loud and dreadful imprecations, and forthwith consigned him to the torments of purgatory, in retribution. Yes, he felt that he was there: there, among the unhappy

spirits, suffering the extremity of torture! And, oh! the awful groans and howls of anguish that resounded through that dreadful place! How the wretched spirits ground their teeth in rage and despair; and shrieked and tore themselves in agony, as they leaped and sprang out of the circling flames, crackling and hissing around! Now a troop of fiends surround him, and he feels the burning heat has seized upon him! They take and thrust him among the fiercest of the fires; and——

Suddenly he awoke, with a start and shudder; his person and clothes bathed in perspiration, which fell from him like huge drops of rain. The stars were shining calmly above him, but the dreadful sounds of which he had been dreaming still seemed to salute his waking ears. Yells and shrieks, howlings and groanings, sounded close beside him, thrilling through every nerve; and still they ceased not. Presently he heard a sound which recalled his scattered senses.

It was his horse in the midst of a pack of wolves!

It was too late to save him. The wolves, pinched with hunger, are unusually daring at

night. There is a numerous herd of them, and they are quarrelling together over every morsel of the spoil; for there is not sufficient to satisfy the whole. Several of them have turned away, with their hunger sharpened, and approach the hunter, while their companions are battling for the horse's bones. Meanwhile he has started up, seized his double-barrelled rifle—the only weapon, beside his lasso, which he has brought with him—determining to hold out as long as possible, and to sell his life as dearly as he can.

The wolves now surround him as he stands; but hesitate in advancing to the attack. This race of wolves are in the habit of retreating from the presence of man, unless in extreme want; but now it is night; they are in great numbers; their appetite has been stimulated by the taste of blood; there is but one man—and they come nearer. So closely they approach at last, that he can perceive the starlight reflected brightly, though in a warmer tint, on their eyeballs; while the vapour of their breath envelopes him. Animated by a sudden and almost despairing impulse, he levels his piece at the nearest group, and fires. One of the wolves lies dead, another is

wounded, and the rest retreat to a little distance in alarm.

It is not for long, however; they perceive that nothing follows, and very soon return. They approach him, and close him round again: his position is critical. They come nearer still. But a slight diversion in his favour occurs from their summarily falling upon their comrades who have just been shot, and devouring them with savage eagerness. This second course produces almost as much confusion as did the first; under cover of which the watchful hunter attempts to retreat slowly and carefully from their immediate neighbourhood.

Soon they follow him once more; and every barrier between him and a dreadful death seems removed. Still he retreats slowly and half unconsciously: they are very near him now. Now, one has leaped upon him; and the remaining barrel of his rifle has exploded in the struggle. Fortunately it has shot the wolf in question; the rest fall back in affright, and devour their dead companion as before.

If he can only gain the deep stream which he sees shining on his right hand, the hunter will have a chance of safety: the water will,

at all events, be an auxiliary to him, as he is an excellent swimmer. The thought inspires him with renewed hope and energy; he halloos, and beats off his enemies at every step; and, after many narrow escapes, he reaches the banks of the river. The wolves, however, appear to have a perception of the importance of the moment; and just as he is about to plunge into the stream, they make one fierce, simultaneous rush upon him.

For an instant nothing can be discerned but foam and splashes, as the water is divided both by the assailants and assailed. The hunter, diving beneath the surface, has almost placed himself beyond reach of the wolves; whilst many of their bodies float around him, drowned. He is beginning to congratulate himself on his deliverance, as he perceives his enemies yelling and gnashing their teeth together on the opposite bank, when he feels himself seized by two animals of a larger and stronger growth than the rest. Their teeth almost meet in his flesh, and, in spite of his utmost exertions to the contrary, they are gradually drawing him under water. In vain he grasps their throats with maniac energy; still they keep their hold, and the stream

becomes dyed with his blood. Presently, the smaller of the two looses his hold; the current carries him away, and he is drowned.

Only one of his assailants, a large she-wolf, remains to be dealt with now. He struggles desperately, but in vain, to free himself from her grasp; yet he perceives a kind of fixedness in her movements that he had not observed before. Stretching out his arm once more, he places his hand upon her head and mouth; and finds that she is dead. Still her weight draws him downwards: almost immediately, he feels a faintness creep over him; he loses his consciousness; and, with the gripe of the dead wolf still fixed firmly upon him, he sinks below the surface of the water. But in the act of sinking, the bodies of the hunter and his enemy cleaving the stream violently, the hold of the beast became relaxed. The man rose to the surface, and his head coming in contact with a sharp projecting rock, his consciousness returned. He opened his eyes forthwith struggled, to the bank, and, in great weakness and exhaustion, succeeded in climbing upon it. As the first rays of the quiet morning light broke in the distance, the full particulars of his past peril flashed

upon his mind; he turned and beheld the last group of his assailants retreating in the opposite direction, and folding his hands upon his breast, he gave hearty thanks to Heaven for his deliverance.

Bandaging his wounds with some strips of linen torn from his dress, he retraced his steps towards the village; where he arrived in the evening, without horse or hides, and almost overpowered by fatigue and hunger. The dealer, Zio, on hearing his story, disbelieved it altogether, and persisted in asserting that he had disposed of his hides and pony to another merchant on his way. While the priest, on the other hand, never failed to impress upon his mind, that his night's misadventures had been caused by his own sinful neglect, in not paying his evening *devoirs* to the Virgin, before he lay down to sleep beside his horse, on the Red Point of the prairie.

CHAPTER XXXI.

SNAKE-HUNTING.

Forest paths.—A narrow escape.—Mule killed by a serpent.—Snake-hunters and their implements.—A trophy of the chase.—Snake-hunter's song.

HAVING become quite careless and thoughtless on the subject of snakes, I wandered through forests and brakes, beside tufted rocks, and over trunks of fallen trees, just as if there were no such dreaded animals in existence; but chanced, however, about the time that the indifference resulting from long impunity had reached its height, to receive a very impressive reminder of the dangerous power of these reptiles.

Passing through a forest, in the vicinity of a small hamlet called Suera, in the tierra caliente, at an early hour in the morning, and finding it excessively hot, though the sun had not long risen, I was glad to loiter along a narrow path in the shade

of the overhanging trees; my mule walked lazily a few paces before me, stopping from time to time to insert his nose in a tuft of grass, or a heap of dried leaves upon the ground. Proceeding in this manner for some distance, I at last began to see the sunlight on the other side of the wood, and to think of the heated atmosphere into which we were about to emerge again.

I stepped aside for a moment to admire a rich tuft of large purple flowers, my mule having plodded on about eight or ten yards ahead, when, as I turned from the flowers towards the path, a sensation as of a flash of lightning struck my sight, and I saw a brilliant and powerful snake winding its coils round the head and body of the poor mule. It was a large and magnificent boa of a black and yellow colour, and it had entwined the poor beast so firmly in its folds, that, ere he had time to utter more than one feeble cry, he was crushed and dead. The perspiration broke out on my forehead as I thought of my own narrow escape; and only remaining a moment to view the movements of the monster as he began to uncoil himself, I rushed through the brushwood, and did not

consider myself safe until I was entirely free of the forest.

I had occasion to return by the same road in the evening; but on arriving at the wood, I turned into a different path from the one we had taken before; and kept an eager watch on the surrounding trees and bushes. Having almost reached the middle of the wood, I heard a number of voices chanting a wild air, and on turning an angle of the road saw a troop of figures—Indians and Mestizoes—advancing, armed with long poles and flexible steel wands, which they flourished in the air as an accompaniment to their song. On their first appearance I thought them robbers, and grasped the old leathern purse in my pocket as I would have done the hand of a departing friend; but a nearer approach satisfied me as to their avocation: they were snake-hunters. Their long poles were used for the purpose of starting their prey, and overpowering them when discovered; and the flexible steel rods in their hands were still more characteristic of their vocation, being often used so dexterously as to cause instant death to a serpent of the largest size.

These quaint sportsmen trailed behind them

a huge snake which they had recently killed. I eyed it with some attention as they came up, and discovered that it was very like the monster who had devoured my mule in the morning: there were the same head and eyes, the same black and yellow scales, and it was of similar proportions. I raised the skin of the throat, which had been cut, half expecting to perceive the shaggy ears of a mule remaining there undigested; but no such appearance could I discern: he might have been my enemy of the forenoon notwithstanding, and I tried to persuade myself that he was so. I regarded the group, as they retreated, with mingled feelings of satisfaction for the justice they had done, and of sympathy for the risks they must encounter in their dangerous pursuit.

The songs often indulged in on these excursions are generally rude, unmeaning, and untranslatable; but the following is an English imitation of one of the least barbarous:—

"Come brothers away! to the far, wild brake,
Where the snaky tribes their pleasure take;
Where they slily spring from their greenwood lair,
On the innocent prey that passes there.
Death to the serpent! brothers, I say,
On with me! come away! come away!

"Smoothly and gaily the monster trails,
With his shining spots and golden scales;
Till charm'd with his dazzling brilliancy,
The victims gaze, and gaze till they die.
Up brothers, on! his pathway trace,
For death lies hid in his vile embrace!

"The forest flowers will more gaily spring,
And the birds aloft the sweeter sing,
And ev'ry beast of the field be glad,
When the foes of all on the earth are laid;
For the birds and beasts, and the flowers fear
The wily serpents who ambush there!

"Soon our hunting-poles shall quickly chase
Their enemy from his lurking-place;
And our trusty knives and steel wands true,
Shall drink the blood of the reptile crew.
Death to the serpent! brothers, I say,
On with me! come away! come away!"

CHAPTER XXXII.

A SONG TO THE VIRGIN.

Travellers' anticipations.—Beauties of Mexican scenery.—Mountain passes.—Tropical trees and flowers.—River scene.—Distant view.—Music at twilight.—Song to the Virgin.

AN Englishman, perhaps, of all people, is the least likely to be satisfied with the life and institutions he may encounter in foreign countries; and for the very sufficient reason, that he has more cause than any one else to be satisfied with his own.

Many a discontented Briton, wearied with the conventionalities of home, and anxious for a change, has packed up his trunk and set out on his travels, in search of Utopias and bowers of Paradise. But as those white cliffs he was so anxious to leave behind really begin to fade in the distance, he feels a sadness of the heart creeping over him; and when

they are completely lost to his sight, he finds the brilliancy which illumed imaginary prospects, gathers in greater refulgence around the well-remembered scenes he has for a time forsaken. In absence, his own country becomes doubly dear to him; and he becomes a somewhat severe critic on the strange usages by which he is soon surrounded. As the circle of his experience widens, though some of his national prejudices may be effaced, his expectations are commonly disappointed: he finds "nothing new under the sun," and feels, emphatically, that "there is no place like home."

Yet the traveller may indulge himself, especially in such a country as Mexico, with the most pleasing prospects and illusions. He will see sublimity in the wild mountain-passes, where all is vast and solemn, and nothing human or transient intervenes between himself and his Creator; where everlasting hills rear their heads against the expanse of heaven, and aged pine-trees cast their sombre shadows; where volcanic layers and fissures remind him of bygone ages, and of nature's strong convulsions; and huge, rough-cleft rocks and sudden precipices at once assert themselves as the work of

an All-powerful hand: in such scenes the wayfarer feels himself separated from the worldly strife without; even his natural voice sounds drear and changed, and the very herbage beneath his feet appears age-stricken and unearthly.

Then, how delightful to linger on the borders of a fair tropical grove or forest, where the orange and pomegranate trees shed a luscious and appetizing fragrance upon the air; where the palm and myrtle flourish together, and the huge banana affords a cooling shade; there, too, the citron and mezquite luxuriate, the cotton-tree and agave vie with one another, the tulip-tree spreads its branches, and a hundred delicious fruit-trees bend beneath their juicy load. Birds of brilliant plumage scream and fan themselves from bough to bough; rich painted butterflies flutter about the scene; gorgeous flowers cluster, and honeyed trailing-shrubs spring up, and the air is filled with a hum of music, and all is sunshine and beauty.

One may wander beside a lake or river, noting how the watery expanse spreads out from the lucid foreground, forming a bright flashing mirror midway, and melting into a hazy distance; the waterfowl skim and quaver

upon the surface, and leaves and rushes wave in the open breeze; how the trees and bushes are reflected clearly, the ripples burst into life against the stones, and the extremes of motion and repose meet together.

Perhaps a lonely valley may entice him, where belts of landscape, of different kinds, mount one above another; and miles of corn-growing uplands and lines of verdant fields, clumps of dark foliage and beds of ruddy rocks, sugar plantations and country haciendas, chilé plots and cochineal allotments, agricultural watch-towers and rural hamlets, may be reviewed in turn, as they rise in due gradations to the hills on the horizon.

A shady retreat, beside a spacious alameda, or public walk, is also characteristic of the country, where, from a rustic seat, secure from interruption, one may note the gay groups of cavalleros and donzellas, advancing through the avenues of trees, on their evening promenade; the fashionable and the luxurious driving along in their lumbering coaches; and the tradesman and his customers strolling alike at the close of day. Where staid processions are marshalled past, and stately officials solace themselves after the fatigues

of duty; where children play and hide themselves, and mothers and nurses live over again the days of infancy; while the sick and drooping breathe the pure air at stated seasons, or lovers' vows ascend in sweet cadences on the air, at twilight.

I have sat under the trees skirting such a scene as the last, until the gray tints of evening have deepened into darkness; enjoying the coolness of the retirement, the luxuriance of the spreading branches, the vista views in the changing atmosphere, the sight of the cheerful homeward-bound figures, and the sound of merry voices as they swept by. Sometimes the love-lorn lute of a languishing swain would become tenderly audible, or the murmured song of a soliloquizing cavalier; and, more frequently still, would a hymn to the Virgin—tuned in her honour by some loitering devotees—strike musically on the growing stillness of the night.

These songs to the Virgin are, for the most part, ludicrously childish things: a few rhymes loosely put together, with nothing to recommend them but their pious intention. The subjoined stanzas, however, are imitated from what struck the writer as one of the

best of these performances; though it is not a song to the Virgin, strictly speaking, but should rather be called—

Our Lady's Message from Heaven.

Once ere the Angel of Death descended
To our world of woe,
At the throne of the Virgin he attended,
Her pleasure to know.

"Are there any among the maidens bright,
The daughters of men,
Who are worthy to grace my bower of light?"
Said our lady then;

"For I would that the pure and beautiful
My glory should see;
And the good, and the tender, and truthful,
Come hither to me.

"Then in whispers soft tell the young and fair,
What my pleasure is,—
That they flee the false joys of earth, and share
My abode of bliss.

"Of earth's sweetest flowers shall my handmaidens be;
And transplanted here,
They shall bloom in the light of eternity,
My bright throne near."

So now we know when the fair ones we love,
Are summoned away;
They are gone to attend on the Virgin above,
In glory for aye!

CHAPTER XXXIII.

TREASURE-SEEKERS AND CONTRABANDISTAS.

Mestizo digging for treasure.—Hopes and misfortunes of Lope Cluca.—Unexpected discovery.—Robbery planned.—The diamond recovered.—Proceedings of contrabandistas.

THE sun was setting gorgeously over the arid rocks and plains of the mining district lying between Jesus-Maria and Chihuahua, in the far north of Mexico—casting, even in its decline, an intense light and burning heat over the scene around—when a young man rose from the sandy earth at the bottom of a small cliff, in the shade of which he had been resting, and taking up a pick-axe, prepared to enlarge a cavity he had formed in the ground, before the evening should overtake him. He had begun his operations on this spot at an early hour in the morning, and had worked on till the heat at noon became so

insupportable, that he was glad to take shelter in the friendly nook; where he had slept, forgetful of the ill success attending his labours.

This young man was a Mestizo, or half-caste, called Lope Cluca, much handsomer in figure and feature than Mexicans of his class commonly are; though it was evident all care of his person was fast giving way to the slovenliness and neglect which his circumstances and occupation prompted: and which might be seen in such perfection among the Indians and earth-breakers, at a little distance beyond him. His hair was long and matted, his clothes were coarse, soiled, and much worn, his hands and face were darkened by the sun beyond their ordinary brown hue, and his beard was untrimmed; nevertheless, his fine figure and manly countenance sufficiently distinguished him from the dirty and repulsive-looking beings, his companions. He had left the city of Mexico many months before, in the hope of mending his fortunes in these sterile northern districts, where rich veins of silver were often found by the meanest adventurers; and he had confidently assured the pretty Teresa Alxarra—for whose sake he had left the

capital and his friends—that he would soon return laden with store of riches sufficient for them all, and which should enable them to fulfil the dearest wishes of their hearts without apprehensions for the future.

To tell of the hazards he encountered, and the privations he endured on his journey, would occupy too much space. Suffice it to say, he was robbed and maltreated by a band of ruffianly ladrones, before he had proceeded a day's journey; and it required all his fortitude to continue his route; but a friend in need assisted him in his extremity, and replenished his empty purse. He had been delayed and victimized by passport-officers at the gates of second-rate towns; had been clapped into a dungeon for losing a carta of safety; and, while there, a holy padre had well nigh frightened him into purgatory, to extort the little money he had secreted in the inner folds of his linen. He had been almost reduced to beg his way as he ascended the country; and suffered from hunger and thirst, nakedness and oppression, from time to time. At length he arrived in the silver regions, and commenced his treasure-hunting toil with the utmost energy and determination; hoping to discover

a vein of the precious ore, and make the best possible bargain with the administradores and agents in the neighbourhood, either for its sale or future working. His success, thus far, had been but scanty; he was only enabled to procure sufficient metal to furnish him with common necessaries: the great object of his search remained as yet unaccomplished. Sometimes his expectations had been excited to the highest pitch by brilliant appearances: beds of compact white sand and clay had mocked his ardent anticipations; white earth, intermixed with stray particles of silver, had often dazzled his sight; but these only served to enhance his disappointment, and render him the more impatient of delay.

As Lope Cluca hastily turned over the gravel at his feet on the evening in question, murmuring and almost despairing of success (only supported, in fact, by sweet thoughts of his absent Teresa Alxarra), his eye was arrested by what appeared to be a shining yellow substance, partially covered with the clay and sand he had turned over. With eager impatience he seized upon it; but found, to his dismay, that the yellow tinge was caused by the rays of the sun reflected from a

transparent stone, imbedded in a ball of earth. He was about to hurl it indignantly away, when a ray of unusually bright light from the surface of the stone caught his eye: the piece of spar was strangely luminous, he thought; he turned it over and over in his hand, broke away the earth surrounding it; and the stone shone more splendidly than ever: it was a diamond of most unusual size, and of the most dazzling brilliancy!

He threw down his pick-axe, and abandoned himself for the moment to the extravagance of his joy. "At last!" he exclaimed, —"at last, my toils and privations are rewarded; and I shall be enabled to return a rich man to my native city, and to Teresa. Gracious Mother of Heaven! what happiness!" He had the presence of mind to check himself immediately, however, and to cast a hurried glance around to see if he had been observed—well aware that the utmost caution would be required to conceal his acquisition from his fellow-workmen. On turning to look at them, however, he concluded that they were too much occupied with their own labours to have noticed him; and he returned to his tent at dusk under the impression that his emotion

had been unperceived; taking care to bring with him his pick-axe and tools, as though nothing had occurred; and concealing his new-found treasure, in a private pocket about his person.

He returned to his labours on the following day, endeavouring to assume as staid and demure a countenance before his comrades, as he could, to disarm suspicion. He began to dig, too, as usual, but made little progress in his task; his mind being too fully occupied with joyful anticipations, to bestow much attention on his now needless exertions; and long before sunset (for the first time since his arrival) he had packed up his implements and hied to his retreat, to meditate upon his good fortune, and on the readiest method to make it available for future happiness.

Poor Lope Cluca! He little dreamed that an inquisitive eye had watched his movements on the preceding evening, as he exulted over his diamond, and that his exclamations on the discovery had been overheard; still less did he suppose that while he was occupied in rejoicing over bliss in prospect, a ruffian was brooding over a scheme to rob him of his treasure, and take away his life.

This man was of Spanish extraction, and styled himself "Don" Manuel—by which title he was well known in the district. His circumstances were desperate when he arrived in the silver regions, for his life had been one of the utmost dissipation; and he was totally unused to labour. It suited him better to wander about the neighbourhood, keenly observant of the success of others for no honest purpose: it was during one of these rambling excursions that he had been an unseen witness of Lope's discovery; and he now believed he had found the opportunity he had long desired, of enriching himself at the expense of another.

It was no part of Don Manuel's policy personally to effect the villany he had designed, so he cast about for some associate who would undertake the execution of the plot, for a share of the booty. His choice fell upon one Cayan, an Indian of great strength of body and ferocity of disposition; he trusted that, when the treasure should be secured, he could frame a pretext to overreach his comrade, and appropriate their acquisition to his own use.

While Lope Cluca was enjoying his happy prospects, these scoundrels were holding a con-

sultation together, as to the means for accomplishing their nefarious purpose.

"I tell you," exclaimed Don Manuel to his companion, "that Lope placed the diamond in his bosom, and it will be necessary first——"

"Necessary to find it out, Dios! Leave that to me," said Cayan, interrupting him. "I'll do the business without stumbling over it, I warrant; but what is your share of it to be, my zapilote (buzzard)?"

"Ave Maria!" answered the Don. "My part will be to watch him, and give you the signal at the fitting opportunity: you understand, danta (wild boar)."

"Quick then, Don Manuel," said the other, "or I wait not for you. San Miguel! already I scent his blood, and I long to see it! Ave Señora, I think I shall do without you!"

"I will be quick; and *you*—you must do it effectually!"

"Effectually? De mi! By to-morrow night——"

"Yes! By to-morrow night the diamond is our own!"

On the evening of the following day Lope Cluca was accosted by the wily Don Miguel at the foot of the cliff, and detained in conver-

sation by him till nightfall, when with a bland smile he bade him adieu; and Lope bent his steps towards his tent as usual.

He had not proceeded far on his way, however, when he stumbled over a large stone lying in the path; and directly afterwards felt himself struck on the head with a heavy blunt instrument; so violently, that on the blow being repeated, he fell to the ground completely stunned, the blood issuing from his ears and temples in copious streams.

"That has finished his treasure-seeking, I swear!" exclaimed a hoarse voice, as the Indian bent over him; and, after rifling his pockets, tore away from his breast, the small bag which held the diamond.

The flow of blood from Lope's temples, however, proved the means of recovering his consciousness, and he was soon able to move with difficulty. On recovering his faculties he heard the sound of voices at a little distance, and thought he could distinguish these words uttered in a tone he had heard before:—

"I tell you, I will keep the diamond until morning, Cayan; when we will have it examined in order to share its value equally between us."

"Do you think Cayan is a fool?" was the rejoinder. "Jesus Maria! No! I see what you want very well. Dios! You deserve no share of the booty at all, for your pains!"

"But the diamond is mine!" exclaimed the other. "I first told you of it. I will pay you your share equitably; but the diamond is mine!"

Here a struggle ensued between the contending parties: several blows were struck, and a heavy fall was followed by a cry of suffering, and a groan; then there was silence broken by the sound of retiring footsteps. Lope contrived to bandage his temples with a piece of linen he had torn from his dress; and with great difficulty dragged himself—fainting and exhausted from loss of blood—to the neighbourhood of the miners' habitations, where he arrived at a late hour of the night.

It was reported betimes on the following day in the district, that Cayan, the Indian, had attacked and robbed Lope Cluca and Don Manuel, and had escaped; also that the body of the latter had been found, close beside the Niña cliff, quite dead.

Intense was the disappointment and exasperation of Lope Cluca, as he recovered from the

effects of his wounds, thus to have the cup of bliss dashed from his lips. He lingered for a while around the scene of his former success, incapable of exertion, and careless of what might befall him. Then, summoning all his remaining resolution, he determined to remove to a distant part of the mining regions; there to recommence a career of toil and privation. After two days wearisome travel, therefore, he arrived within the precincts of another settlement, and resumed his labours. This district was less productive than the last, and far more exposed to the attacks of hostile Indians, also; still, he determined to labour on and succeed in his aims, or lose his life in the attempt.

One bright morning he left his humble couch earlier than usual, and had strayed to a considerable distance on the other side of the mountain before he became aware of it. He was abstractedly watching the vapour, as it still lay in shady spots, or was absorbed in others by the heat of the newly-risen sun, when his attention was arrested by seeing, in a slight hollow in the sand before him, the body of a tall, muscular Indian, awfully bruised and mangled, with a mass of congealed and darkened blood around it. The sight at once

convinced Lope that the inimical Indians were not far off, and that the butchery before him was their work.

On approaching the body, he perceived from various indications that the fatal affray must have taken place on the preceding evening; and at the same moment recognised the features of Cayan, the accomplice and assassin of Don Miguel! It was evident that the wretched man had made a desperate resistance; his left hand still clutched a large lock of the hair of an antagonist, and his right was clenched as though yet grasping his weapon. His clothes were tattered, and his pockets were torn away; but as Lope stood over him, he saw a small cotton bag peeping forth from the breast of his shirt, which the Indians must have overlooked in the darkness. He eagerly seized and tore it open, and with breathless haste discovered that it contained the missing diamond! Joy choked his utterance, tears mounted to his eyes, and in a transport of gratitude he knelt upon the ground, and gave thanks to God and the Virgin.

Lope Cluca did not remain long in the silver regions, after this happy sequel to his adventure. He forthwith made arrangements for

exchanging the small amount of ore he had collected for its value in money, and only waited till an opportunity should present itself of returning to the capital, with such an escort as might ensure safety on the road. He was fortunate enough to encounter a company of muleteers carrying barras of silver, with whom he set out in high spirits; once more taking care to conceal his diamond about his person, and holding little communication with the members of the troop, that his treasure might sustain no further risk.

After innumerable alarms of robbers, and a few stray encounters, in which the travelling party had the advantage, they arrived in good time in the capital, where Lope at once proceeded to barter his diamond for a large sum of money—only a tithe of its value, indeed, but which amply contented him. The fortunate Mestizo—now elevated to the dignity of a caballero, or gentleman—was shortly afterwards united to his loved Teresa Alxarra, amid the congratulations of those relatives whom he was in future enabled to maintain in affluence. It was often remarked, moreover, in after years, that he was never better pleased than when relating to them, and to his family,

the strange history of the twice-found diamond, and his past sufferings in the silver regions.

The following anecdote will illustrate the life led by the contrabandistas, or smugglers, who abound in such numbers in Mexico:—

It was a merry time within the low double-roomed rancho of Antonio Pulf, the contra bandista. A table of goodly dimensions occupied the largest floor; and around it were seated a dozen swarthy adventurers, or more, in the most free-and-easy positions, and with various degrees of dignified joviality visible on their rugged countenances. The table was strewed with bowls of aguardiente and pulque, and platters of meats and tortilla cakes; the latter of which were smoking hot from the griddle, and the former burning hot with chilé pepper, as a matter of course. It was a grand occasion: the gang had been long accustomed to carry on their illicit traffic in defiance and contempt of the government; and they had just concluded a transaction on a more magnificent scale than ever. The goods had been reconsigned almost immediately on the arrival of their smuggling vessel; they had received the money, together with an unlimited allowance of native-dis-

tilled spirit, on account; and they were now met to feast themselves on the fruits of their success.

The room in which they were assembled was large, but crowded to inconvenience with tackle and spars of coasting vessels, kegs, barrels, boxes, and bales, which they kept as a partly concealed, partly avowed stock in trade. On some jagged and broken shelves stood several large canvass bags, of questionable appearance, only imperfectly covered by the nets and fragments of sails drawn over them. On one side of the apartment was a huge chest, from under the slightly raised cover of which gleamed the point of a sword, and the muzzle of a rifle-barrel; it contained, beside arms, different articles of clothing, three or four boat-hooks, the like number of coils of cordage, and a couple of dark lanterns, seldom used. Against the other wall of the building were ranged a few barrels, used on the present occasion as side-tables; though it was no difficult matter, from their suggestive appearance, to hazard a shrewd guess as to the real quality of their contents, could their roughly-nailed covers have been raised. Boxes and bales were stowed into corners, and were even thrust

under the large table at which their proprietory were seated; for the business was prosperous, and the stock in hand usually a large one. The room behind was only a repetition of the other, but still more densely crammed with similar articles.

The hilarity of the festive meeting was just at its height, and the capitaz, Pulf—a stalwart, tall, dark, hairy-faced man—was raising a brimming cup of spirit to his lips, toasting success to the cause, when a young contrabandista entered the apartment in haste, with news that the custom-house officers were out on the coast a little below, and had seized upon several hogsheads of theirs, by chance remaining there, as property confiscated to the government.

In place of this intelligence causing consternation among the band, however, they received it with a most uproarious burst of laughter, and, after quaffing another cup of aguardiente each, they rose to their feet and quitted the rancho; good-humouredly swearing, by St. Peter and St. Paul, that they would trundle the meddling officials inside their barrels, bring them to their own quarters there, and cook and eat them for supper, as

a fitting conclusion to their day's rejoicing. They well knew that the custom-house officers of the government were not in sufficient numbers, either there or anywhere else, to offer more than a show of opposition to a determined band of contrabandistas!

They sallied forth to the beach at once; and the half-dozen custom-house men hastily prepared to make good their claim to the hogsheads they had seized. It was a moonlight night; and, in a short time, the coast echoed with hoarse shouts and execrations, and the brilliant light shone upon uplifted arms and eager combatants. But the skirmish was only of very brief continuance: the government officers had to contend against fearful odds; they were none of the bravest by nature; and, at the close of the first onset, they turned to fly. The smugglers followed, in a resolute manner, at their heels; and would no doubt have overtaken and captured them, but that their steps were not quite so steady and certain as usual, by reason of the liquor they had drunk. As it was, they were only able to take one prisoner, who had been slightly wounded in the fight; and him they seized and drove

rudely before them, as they retraced their way to the rancho.

Immediately on their arrival, they mounted the poor officer on the table, among the bottles, cups, and platters; and held a drunken consultation as to what punishment should be inflicted on the prisoner.

"Swing him up to one of the beams, at once," shouted a brutal-looking fellow with a thick neck, a bushy exposed throat, and a red handkerchief over his eyes.

"Make him stand in a keg of spirits, and set fire to it," exclaimed another, with a sly look, and an admixture of the humorous in his composition.

"Tie his limbs to a coil of rope, and let us pull both ends of it," quietly suggested a third, who could scarcely stand, from the effects of his potations.

"Hang him heels uppermost, and sprinkle his face with vitriol, till we see what he looks like," benevolently added a fourth member of the party.

They were accordingly about to haul him from the table in the rudest manner, to carry either one or other of these recommendations into effect, when the capitaz, Antonio

Pulf, interfered — exclaiming with a loud voice, that they would give the rascal his choice either to join the band immediately, or to suffer death by one of the above-named processes.

The poor fellow eagerly availed himself of the opportunity of saving his life, and lost no time in accepting the most favourable proposal of the leader. Then the smugglers surrounded and led him before Pulf, who was seated on the only chair in the room; he mounted upon it, and from that elevation, delivered the following impressive charge to his newly-elected follower.

"Ave Maria! Thou, who callest thyself Martin Valio, late an officer in the service of our foolish and oppressive government, art now fully admitted a member of our band. Thou art bound to obey its laws, to execute its orders, to respect its interests, and to preserve its secrets. By night or by day, on sea or on shore, far away or near, thou wilt consider thyself amenable to this agreement, and serve us faithfully; or thy life shall answer it. If thou dost prove treacherous, our vengeance will overtake thee when thou dost least expect it: our emissaries will be ever near when thou

knowest it not; no distance will weaken our control; and no power will shield thee from our resentment. On the other hand, if thou dost serve us faithfully and well, we will defend and support thee, and thou wilt have a due share of our booty with the rest. In the name of our Blessed Lady of Guadaloupe, dost thou accept of these proposals?"

"In the name of the Holy and Blessed Virgin, I do accept them!" was the instant reply of the new-made contrabandista.

Suffice it to say, that the quondam custom-house officer, Martin Valio, proved a most valuable addition to the band; and is, at this moment, the prosperous capitaz of the troop, in place of his highness Antonio Pulf—who lately fell a victim to his old wounds, and a large importation of new aguardiente.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

A MONKEY ANECDOTE.

Habits of monkeys.—Their sociality.—Treatment of each other.—Crossing a stream.—A serpent's breakfast.—The monkeys' manœuvre to revenge their comrade.—The snake destroyed.

MANY a comical story might be told of the monkeys who cling and flutter, like uncouth birds, round the forest trees in the tierra caliente of Mexico. Their sociality is amusing; for they are generally to be seen in compact tribes or gangs: and very good-humouredly they seem to affect each other's society. The tricks they play upon other animals or on one another,—cheating the harmless denizens of the forest of their food and habitations; pilfering the birds' eggs from their nests; leaping upon the backs of wondering cattle, tenaciously holding on to their elevated seats, and pelting and bespattering one another with

nuts and bursting fruits—are extremely droll and cunning; and their grimaces, whether in tricksiness or anger,—screaming and muttering as though much depended on their eloquence — are irresistibly ludicrous. When hungry, their over-reaching habits and quarrels, over a discovery of food,—each feeling greater pleasure in abstracting the store of his neighbour, than in consuming of his own, are incessant.

They are in the habit of shaking fruit or nuts from unapproachable boughs, and hurling at each other when on inaccessible elevations; and their treatment of the sick and incapable is barbarously comical; while their method of settling disputes among themselves is most summary and decisive. They often form themselves into a kind of ladder or chain, and suspended from trees, sway themselves backwards and forwards till they have crossed a stream, by swinging the other end of this chain-bridge of monkeys on to a tree on the opposite bank.

One night a monkey belonging to a large tribe occupying the trees around, had been so teased by the musquitoes as to be unable, for several hours, to enjoy his usual repose.

Losing his patience at length, he gave up the attempt to sleep, in despair, and determined to destroy as many of his enemies as possible, in revenge; yet the musquitoes continued to buzz about and feed upon him, and the greater number he killed, the more was his anger excited. After being employed some hours in this manner by break of day very few of his adversaries remained; and in exultation over his victory, he made a hasty caper, lost his balance, and fell from the tree upon which he had been attempting to sleep.

When he reached the ground, he saw the glittering eyes of a large snake fixed intently upon him, as he lay half coiled round some loose rocks and stones, with the first rays of the coming light shining brightly on his black, white and crimson scales. The snake had been looking out in a longing manner for his morning's meal, and the poor monkey had arrived within his reach most opportunely. He pounced upon him, and though the monkey was almost as large as himself, he quickly crushed him between his folds, anointed him from head to foot with his slime; and finally swallowed him, in a leisurely and self-satisfied manner.

This process had been observed with great indignation by the monkeys up in the trees, and no sooner had the serpent despatched his breakfast, than a sputtering consultation appeared to be held amongst them; it ended in their unanimously descending to the ground, at a safe distance from the snake, and collecting together as many loose fragments of rock and branches of trees as possible. Armed with these missiles, they approached their enemy as nearly as they dared, and hurled them with great violence and effect at his head and body; the snake, after making an ineffectual attempt to seize upon the foremost, at last turned about quickly and retreated into his hole—a miniature cavern of rock, situated beneath the sleeping apartments of the monkeys.

The outraged community appeared determined to avenge the slaughter of their companion, but knew not how it was to be done. Their enemy seemed retired beyond reach, and with the best will in the world to follow him and brave it out, the attempt to enter his den would be certain destruction. After a renewed debate, and much chattering and leaping about, a few of the leaders armed

themselves with clubs and sticks of a still larger size, from the loose wood abounding in the forest. With these weapons they once more approached the rocky projection, still keeping a respectful distance from the entrance, and began to beat upon the stones on the surface, with the intention of frightening the serpent from his hiding-place. They ran to and fro screeching, making the wood resound with their blows; threw stones into the mouth of the hole; but all would not do: the more energetic the means adopted, the firmer seemed the resolve of the besieged to remain in garrison.

At length, with a degree of sagacity almost incredible in "the inferior animals," but not by any means remarkable in monkeys, their tactics underwent a change. A monkey of large size and peculiarly knowing physiognomy, separated himself from his companions, and placed his body in an unconscious and inviting manner in front of the hollow, at the space of a few yards from the entrance. His comrades meanwhile retreated to a little distance, and awaited the issue of the manœuvre which was to tempt their adversary from his quarters. The position of the adven-

turer seemed a perilous one; but, despite his apparent unconcern, he kept a sharp eye upon the den, and was ready to make a nimble retreat when his purpose should be effected. In this posture all parties remained for some time; the monkeys maintaining a profound silence, and the hissing noise being kept up incessantly within the cave — yet no forked tongue or shining eyes could be tempted to reveal themselves. Then the venturous animal rose from his unassuming attitude and came yet nearer to the hollow, shrieking and leaping this time, to attract the attention of the recluse; the hissing continued, but still the retired monster kept close within his lair.

The determination of the invaders, nevertheless, appeared only more excited by their want of success; and to draw out the despoiler from his den, with safety to themselves, was a task well suited to their meddlesome and vivacious dispositions; so, as a last resource, they summoned their whole forces—claiming the assistance of their friends and neighbours, who had by this time assembled from all quarters—to eject him in the most summary manner. They nimbly, but with the utmost

caution, removed all the outside stones and pieces of rock one by one, bringing their united strength to lift the more weighty fragments, till all were cleared away; the projecting rock was not a large one, but much remained to be done. They broke away the loose pieces about the entrance, so that the avenue was considerably widened; they then collected fragments of rock to assist them in breaking off others; the aperture grew wider, and at last they began to discern the brilliant coils and shining eyes of the serpent at the extremity of the den. Hurling some stones violently against him, they succeeded in forcing him from his retreat in a rage; and he was no sooner fully exposed to view, than a hundred stones and pieces of rock of a large size were dashed upon him; he wavered for one moment in the attempt to return, and in the next, his head was so crushed and beaten in as to render him utterly helpless and at their mercy. They then despatched him amid loud screams of exultation; appearing to take a great delight in seeing him quiver beneath them, and in imprinting their paws upon his beautiful skin from time to time.

"My only wonder was," added the narrator

of the anecdote, "that they did not carry out the joke by lighting a fire, broiling him over it, and making a joyous repast upon the remains of their recent enemy."

CHAPTER XXXV.

ANCIENT AZTEC TEMPLES AND WORSHIP.

Manner of addressing priests.—Formation of lengthy Aztec words.—Temples and idols.—Great temple of Teocalli, its square wall, gates, and threshold gods.—Initiatory chapel and its accessories.—Square for religious dances.—Dimensions of temple.—Steps and balustrade of different stories.—Platform and holy towers.—Vessels for sacred fire.—Minor chapels.—Religious sacrifices.—Gods of providence and war.—Colossal female idol.—Ancient worship.

THE Aztecs, or ancient Mexicans, habitually addressed their officiating priests thus:—

"NATLAZOMAHUIZTESPIXCATATZIN."

This, strange to say, is only a single Aztec word, complete and undivided; which, translated into an English sentence, would signify, "Venerable-priest-whom-I-cherish-as-my-father."

Excessively long words, of similar construction, are characteristic of the ancient Mexican tongue; they are not compounded, as is the

case in other languages, but their peculiarities often depend on the manner of forming the plural number; sometimes the first syllable is doubled for this purpose, as "miztli," plural "mimiztin;" and occasionally the repetition occurs in the middle of a word, as "ichpochtli," plural "ichpopochtin." Words of this strangely comprehensive formation, have been found to include even thirty and two-and-thirty letters. "Amatlacuilolitquitcatlaxtlahuilli," signifying, "The-reward-given-to-the-messenger-who-carries-a-paper-on-which-is-painted-tidings." This is a single, undivided word, and contains thirty-three letters—the former example, given above, being composed of no fewer than twenty-seven.

The subject of the Aztec, or Nahuatl, religion, their gods, and the practice of offering human sacrifices, have been briefly described in a former chapter; but a more minute account of the principal temples and idols formerly existing, compiled from several ancient authorities, may not be inappropriate.

The great temple of Teocalli, or Mexith (from which the city of Mexico derived its name), was at first a humble cabin built of mud and hardened clay; but by the munifi-

cence of successive Aztec kings, it at length became the richest and most extensive building in ancient America. It occupied the centre of the city, and was surrounded by a vast, high wall, of great thickness, built of stone, in the form of a square, and wrought on the outside with knots of serpents intertwisted. The four sides of the square had as many gates, opening to the four quarters of the heavens; over each gate was a stone figure with outstretched arms: these were threshold gods, for the adoration of devotees on their entrance. Above each gate was, also, a building supplied with warlike implements, where the troops of the city retired on emergency; and on the inside of the walls were the habitations of the priests and attendants on the temple.

Near one of the gates was an initiatory chapel of stone, with thirty steps leading up to a flat roof; round this building rows of trees were planted, through holes in which were thrust bars, forming a continuous line, which were perpetually strung with the heads of victims sacrificed. The priests carefully kept an account of these ghastly trophies, and renewed them from time to time, as they fell

away from decay. Between the square wall and the temple, there was room for from eight to ten thousand persons, who assembled and danced upon the solemn feast-days and spectacles; the space being paved with smoothly-polished stones, joined by white and red cement.

The temple itself stood in the midst of the space enclosed, and was built in the form of a truncated pyramid, 378 feet square at its base; its flat roof was nearly 120 feet high, but the altitude of its highest towers was nearly 170 feet: seen from a distance it had the appearance of an enormous cube, with small altars and wooden cupolas on its top. The materials employed in its erection were clay and stones, faced with a porous stone resembling pumice-stone, but hard and smoothly polished; while, for the upper facings, pavements, and ornamental parts, coloured jasper stones of great value were used: which, with the red and white cement, had a rich and beautiful effect.

The building consisted of five stories shewn externally (the eastern pyramids had five floors internally); each, from the base upwards, being less by six feet all round than the one below it; and upon each story there was

a flat open gallery, on which three or four men could walk abreast. On three sides of the building, every story was plain; but on each of the different stories on the south side was ranged a flight of steps — not a single continued staircase, but five, running from gallery to gallery; so that, on arriving at the top of the first flight, it was necessary to go all round before ascending the second; and thus with all the remainder. The balustrade rails of these steps were of a serpentine form, adorned with polished stones; while at intervals statues were stationed, supporting candelabra of a fantastic shape in their hands.

Upon the fifth and last story, there was a platform nearly two hundred and thirty feet square, finely paved with polished stones; at one end of which, was the green "Stone of Sacrifices," containing a hollow in which human victims were laid, while the priests opened their breasts and took out their hearts for offerings. In the eastern extremity of the platform, two towers were erected fifty-six feet high, each consisting of three stories; the lower one being built of stone, and the other two of wood: of these the lower story was properly devoted to the sanctuaries, which were of

exquisite materials and workmanship, and where the tutelary idols were placed, upon stones five feet high. The other two stories of these towers were used to preserve the necessary utensils for the worship of the idols; and also the ashes of the kings and principal chiefs deposited there, from a feeling of superstitious devotion. The doors of all these apartments were placed towards the west; and the two towers were surmounted by beautiful wooden cupolas, elaborately carved and ornamented.

Beneath the upper platform was an altar for the "sacrifice of gladiators," or fighting men. Before the two sanctuaries were two stone vessels, about the height of a man, in which the sacred fire was constantly preserved with the utmost care; for it was believed that the greatest calamities would occur if it should ever happen to be extinguished: these vessels were seldom approached without being sprinkled with human blood. In the other temples and sacred edifices comprised within the precincts of the external wall, there were six hundred vessels of the same size and form; which at night, when the whole were kindled, presented a most attractive and brilliant spectacle.

There were also a number of minor chapels, or temples; some devoted to the worship of gods of Fire, Air, Earth, and Water, of the Sun and Night, and of Peace and War. A temple erected to the god of the Sun was particularly splendid: the walls were adorned with golden ornaments, and in the centre of the principal compartment of the building, was a golden image of the luminary, surrounded with rays. The gates of this temple were beautifully ornamented with jasper and coloured woods: separate apartments for the priests being also contained within its walls.

The religious rites associated with these temples were horrible in the extreme: the gods were represented by the priests as delighting in offerings of vengeance and blood, and the deluded multitudes were daily familiarized to the sight of the most shocking atrocities. Superstitious dread appears to have been the source of all religious feeling at this period; and even the decorations of temples and other public buildings—consisting of serpents, tigers, and hideous nondescripts — were eminently calculated to inspire terror. Human sacrifices were considered to be the most expiatory for sin, and the most acceptable to the gods: some-

times the blood alone of the wretched victims would be offered on their altars; at others, their hearts were extracted and placed in the idols' mouths, as favourite morsels; and often entire human bodies were burned, as incense, on the stone altars, amidst loud acclamations. Captives, taken in war, were likewise devoted to the worship of the gods; their heads and hearts were the portions selected for sacrifice, the remainder of their bodies being either burned to ashes, or roasted and devoured by their conquerors. The skulls of all human sacrificial victims were carefully preserved, either in mounds or buildings; and so great was their number, that two of the officers of Cortez are said to have counted as many as 136,000 in the principal building kept for the purpose.

The Aztec god of Providence was called Tezcatlipoca; him they considered the creator of heaven and earth, the soul of the world and the lord of all things. This idol occupied a beautiful chapel lined with curtains, behind which it was placed on a high altar, sitting on a chair, or throne, mounted on a blue globe, to typify heaven. From the sides of the globe projected four rods, carved to represent serpents;

the heads of which the priests placed on their shoulders when they exposed the idol to public adoration. The countenance of Tezcatlipoca was stern and horrible; its expression being heightened by two blue hands, encircling the forehead and nose; and on its head was a helm composed of plumes of various colours, in the form of a bird, with a bill and crest of burnished gold.

This idol also held in its right hand a curling serpent, which served for a staff; and in the left, four arrows, which were venerated as a present from Heaven, together with a shield having five white plumes placed over it in the form of a cross. Concerning these ensigns and ornaments many remarkable extravagances were reported and believed—how they had been received direct from the hands of the gods themselves, and how they were endowed with supernatural powers.

To the left of the temple of Tezcatlipoca was another of the same form and size, likewise filled with ornaments of inestimable value; the walls being hung and the altars covered with jewels and precious stones, placed on feathers of various colours. This temple was dedicated to Huitzilapochtli, or Tlaloch, the god of war.

These two principal gods—of Providence and Battle—were esteemed brothers; and nothing was presumed to transpire without their mutual knowledge and approbation. The prayers and offerings of the priests were, as nearly as possible, equally divided between these two deities; not forgetting, also, a multitude of minor gods inhabiting separate temples, of peculiar, though somewhat conflicting, powers and attributes.

The goddess Teoyamiqui was a horrible colossal figure, hewn out of a solid block of basalt, nine feet high. It was a monstrous combination of the human form, the tiger, and the rattlesnake: large wreathed serpents supplied the place of arms to the figure; its feet were those of a tiger, with claws extended, in the act of seizing its prey; and between them lay the head of a rattlesnake, which appeared to descend from the body of the idol. Its adornments accorded with its frightful exterior: a large necklace composed of human hearts, hands, and skulls, was worn around it, fastened together with entrails, leaving the deformed breasts of the goddess only uncovered; and its drapery was composed of wreathed snakes with open mouths, interwoven in a horrible

manner, the sides of the covering terminating in the wings of a vulture. Both the idol and the accessories forming its dress, were painted to represent natural colours, which greatly enhanced the impressive and terrific effect it was designed to have upon its worshippers.

The ancient city of Mexico could boast of eight large temples of splendid workmanship and great wealth; and those of a smaller size are said to have amounted to two thousand, and were dedicated to as many idols, of different kinds. The public streets were named after the various tutelar deities; and calamities and diseases of opposite natures had each their specified altars, at which the afflicted were directed to prostrate themselves with tortures and penances.

The religious and social institutions of the ancient Mexicans were thus founded in fear and horror; and to abolish atrocities such as those alluded to, in any country, by benevolent missions and intercommunications, must ever be regarded a blessing and a privilege.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

MEXICAN GOVERNMENT AND CONSTITUTION.

A troubled period.—Present constitution.—Privileges of citizens.—Legislative power.—Qualifications of president.—Government council.—Judicial power.—Elections.—Events prior and subsequent to formation of this constitution.

THE present political organization of the Mexican republic is founded, for the most part, on the constitution of the United States of America. The restlessness, outbreaks, proclamations, and discontents, which have been suffered by the country while moulding state affairs into their present shape, are unparalleled for their number and bitterness, within a similar period, in the history of any country in the world.

The constitution which has latterly prevailed with little alteration, was proclaimed by a junta, headed by Santa Anna, on the 13th of June, 1843. The document then drawn up declares the political power to reside essentially in the

nation; that the country adopts the form of a popular representative system for its government; that the republic shall be divided into departments for representation; that the Holy Roman Catholic and Apostolic faith is professed and protected, to the exclusion of all others; that slavery is not to be permitted; that no one is to be called upon to pay illegal contributions; and that nobody shall be molested on account of his political opinions.

It is especially distinct on the subject of Mexican citizenship, its privileges and obligations. All persons born of Mexican parents; those who did not renounce their allegiance at the revolution; natives of bygone Mexican territories, who have since resided in the republic; and persons who have procured, or shall procure, letters of naturalization—are deemed citizens. The citizen's right of voting for representatives cannot be possessed by the married before they are eighteen years old, nor by the unmarried before the age of twenty-one; they must also have an annual income of not less than 200 dollars, derived from real capital, property, or honest industry; and it is proposed, also, that they shall be able to read and write. Habitual intemperance, religious

vows, domestic servitude, and fraudulent bankruptcy, are among the disqualifications from these rights.

The legislative power resides in a chamber of deputies and a senate, forming a congress; the former composed of individuals elected by the different departments. A deputy must be over thirty years of age, and be possessed of an annual income of 1,200 dollars; and a division of this class is to be renewed every two years. Senators must possess an income of 2,000 dollars: the senate consisting of persons belonging to the classes of merchants, manufacturers, proprietors, miners, and agriculturists; and of individuals eminent in civil, military, or ecclesiastical professions: they must be chosen by the departments, and appointed by the president and council. A third of the senate must also be renewed every second year.

A permanent deputation, too, is created by the congress, whose duty it is to call supplementary sessions when required by government, and to accept the certificates of the various officers appointed by the nation. The regular sessions of congress are held twice a year—meeting in January and July, and sitting for the period of three months.

A president is at the head of the executive power: he must be a Mexican by birth, a resident in the republic, more than forty years of age, and in full possession of all the rights of citizenship. The duties of the president are to support and vindicate the laws, and impose fines on those who disobey his lawful orders; to obtain all necessary information respecting courts of justice, and visit them in person when required; to consider all projects of laws approved by the chambers, and suspend their operations during such time:—if, however, thirty days pass by without any objection being urged by the president, the law will be considered sanctioned, and carried into effect without further delay. The president has further power to declare war, and may dispose of the armed forces of the republic; and he has also the right to expel all foreigners from the country who may be deemed dangerous to the State.

The government council is composed of persons permanently selected by the president, and its functions are to aid the executive in its deliberations; it may also originate and suggest measures for the public good, independently.

The judicial power of the country rests in a supreme court, in departmental tribunals, and in other courts previously existing. A perpetual military court-martial is to be selected by the president.

Each department of the republic has a local assembly, subject to the supervision of a governor, also chosen by the president.

For the purposes of election, the population of the country is divided into sections of five hundred inhabitants each, for the election of primary juntas; the citizens voting, by ticket, for one elector to every such section of five hundred. These primary electors name the parties composing the electoral college—one secondary elector to twenty of the primary. The electoral college elects the deputies to congress; and its members must have an income of not less than 500 dollars per annum.

In the November of the year before the expiration of the president's term of office, each departmental assembly, by a majority of votes —or, in the event of equal numbers, by lot— take part in selecting the president for the succeeding five years.

From the first proclamation of a federal constitution in October 1824, to the issue of

the document just described, a series of the most singular proceedings and demonstrations took place in different parts of Mexico. The first federal congress met in January 1825, under President Victoria. Rebellions and pronunciamientos soon followed the opening. Some innovators declared that no Spaniard should be allowed to take any public office whatsoever; others railed at the federation; others scouted the centralizing system. Blood was freely spilt, and insurrections became frequent. Some presidents and officials were imprisoned, others were exiled, a few were executed.

In the first year of Santa Anna's presidency (1833), a pronunciamiento was issued in favour of the church and army; but was summarily subdued by him at Guanajuato. Two or three other declarations followed in as many succeeding years—when a pronunciamiento was produced known as the "Plan of Toluca." Santa Anna then fled to Texas, and was captured there; and Barringon, and Coro, and Bustamente, successively became presidents. Next uprose Mexia with a large army; but at Puebla he was defeated, taken, and shot by his opponent

Santa Anna. Then followed a grand pronunciamiento of the federalists under Urrea, in 1840; which was suppressed by Valencia. In 1841, succeeded a whole *possé* of pronunciamientos, a civil war, a bombardment of the capital, conflicts among the soldiery, the downfall of Bustamente, the elevation of Santa Anna, and the "Plan of Tacubaya"; and in 1843, as I have said—after several attempts to reconcile conflicting systems—the basis of political organization, nearly as it now stands, was declared by Santa Anna and his junta.

Since that period, Santa Anna has been banished, as everybody knows; pronunciamientos and insurrections have again flourished; a war with the United States has been begun and ended; Texas has been annexed; and other presidents have been elected, upon the principles which I have, on the best authority, endeavoured to describe in these few pages.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

COMMERCIAL TREATY WITH GREAT BRITAIN.

Articles of amity and commerce.—Ships of war and post-office packets.—Importation duties.—Tonnage and pilotage.—Regulations for vessels and prizes.—Passports.—Personal liberty.—Property and estates.—Unlading of goods.—Resident consuls.—Safe-conduct.—Religion.—Former convention.—Abolition of the slave-trade.—Additional articles for the benefit of Mexican commerce.

BEFORE alluding to the Mexican commerce, it may be well to furnish a copy of the amicable treaty between Great Britain and the Republic, drawn up and signed in the year 1826; especially as the principal points of the arrangements specified have undergone no material changes since that period, and the existence of the commercial treaty is better known than its guarantees.

ARTICLE I.

There shall be perpetual amity between the dominions and subjects of his Majesty the

King of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and the United States of Mexico and their citizens.

Article II.

There shall be, between all the territories of his Britannic Majesty in Europe, and the territories of Mexico, a reciprocal freedom of commerce. The inhabitants of the two countries, respectively, shall have liberty freely and securely to come, with their ships and cargoes, to all places, ports, and rivers, in the territories aforesaid, saving only such particular ports to which other foreigners shall not be permitted to come, to enter into the same, and to remain and reside in any part of the said territories respectively; also to hire and occupy houses and warehouses for the purposes of their commerce; and, generally, the merchants and traders of each nation, respectively, shall enjoy the most complete protection and security for their commerce.

In like manner, the respective ships of war, and post-office packets, of the two countries, shall have liberty freely and securely to come to all harbours, rivers, and places, saving only such particular ports (if any) to which other

foreign ships of war and packets shall not be permitted to come, to enter into the same, to anchor, and to remain there and refit: subject always to the laws and statutes of the two countries respectively.

By the right of entering the places, ports, and rivers mentioned in this article, the privilege of carrying on the coasting trade is not understood; in which national vessels only are permitted to engage.

Article III.

His Majesty the King of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, engages further, that the inhabitants of Mexico shall have the like liberty of commerce and navigation stipulated for in the preceding article, in all his dominions situated out of Europe, to the full extent in which the same is permitted at present, or shall be permitted hereafter, to any other nation.

Article IV.

No higher or other duties shall be imposed on the importation into the dominions of his Britannic Majesty, of any article of the growth, produce, or manufacture of Mexico;

and no other or higher duties shall be imposed on the importation into the territories of Mexico, of any articles of the growth, produce, or manufacture of his Britannic Majesty's dominions, than are or shall be payable on the like articles, being the growth, produce, or manufacture of any foreign country; nor shall any other or higher duties or charges be imposed in the territories or dominions of either of the contracting parties, on the exportation of any articles to the territories of the other, than such as are or may be payable on the exportation of the like articles to any other foreign country; nor shall any prohibition be imposed upon the exportation of any articles the growth, produce, or manufacture of his Britannic Majesty's dominions, or of the said territories of Mexico, to or from the said dominions of his Britannic Majesty, or to or from the said territories of Mexico, which shall not equally extend to other nations.

Article V.

No higher or other duties or charges on account of tonnage, light or harbour dues, pilotage, salvage in case of damage or ship-

wreck, or any other local charges, shall be imposed in any of the ports of Mexico on British vessels, than those payable in the same ports by Mexican vessels, nor in the ports of his Britannic Majesty's territories on Mexican vessels, than shall be payable in the same ports on British vessels.

ARTICLE VI.

The same duties shall be paid on the importation into the territories of Mexico of any article the growth, produce, or manufacture of his Britannic Majesty's dominions, whether such importation shall be in Mexican or in British vessels; and the same duties shall be paid on the importation into the dominions of his Britannic Majesty, of any article the growth, produce, or manufacture of Mexico, whether such importation shall be in British or in Mexican vessels. The same duties shall be paid, and the same bounties and drawbacks allowed, on the exportation to Mexico of any articles of the growth, produce, or manufacture of his Britannic Majesty's dominions, whether such exportation shall be in Mexican or in British vessels; and the same duties shall be paid, and the same drawbacks and bounties

allowed, on the exportation of any articles the growth, produce, or manufacture of Mexico, to his Britannic Majesty's dominions, whether such exportation shall be in British or in Mexican vessels.

Article VII.

In order to avoid any misunderstanding with respect to the regulations which may respectively constitute a British or a Mexican vessel, it is hereby agreed that all vessels built in the dominions of his Britannic Majesty, or vessels which shall have been captured from an enemy by his Britannic Majesty's ships of war, or by the subjects of his said Majesty, furnished with letters of mark by the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, and regularly condemned in one of his said Majesty's prize courts as a lawful prize, or which shall have been condemned in any competent court from the breach of the laws made for the prevention of the slave-trade, and owned, navigated, and registered according to the laws of Great Britain, shall be considered as British vessels: and that of all vessels built in the territories of Mexico, or captured from the enemy by the ships of Mexico, and condemned under similar

circumstances, and which shall be owned by any citizen or citizens thereof, and whereof the master and three-fourths of the mariners are citizens of Mexico, excepting where the laws provide for any extreme cases, shall be considered as Mexican vessels.

And it is further agreed, that every vessel qualified to trade, as above described, under the provisions of this treaty shall be furnished with a register, passport, or sea-letter, under the signature of the proper person authorized to grant the same, according to the laws of the respective countries (the form of which shall be communicated), certifying the name, occupation, and residence of the owner or owners, in the dominions of his Britannic Majesty, or in the territories of Mexico, as the case may be; together with the name, burden, and description of the vessel as to build and measurement, and the several particulars constituting the national character of the vessel, as the case may be.

Article VIII.

All merchants, commanders of shipping, and others the subjects of his Britannic Majesty, shall have full liberty, in all the territories of

Mexico, to manage their own affairs themselves, or to commit them to the management of whomsoever they please, as broker, factor, agent, or interpreter; nor shall they be obliged to employ any other persons for those purposes than those employed by Mexicans, nor to pay them any other salary or remuneration than such as is paid, in like cases, by Mexican citizens; and absolute freedom shall be allowed, in all cases, to the buyer and seller to bargain and fix the price of any goods, wares, or merchandise, imported into or exported from Mexico, as they shall see good, observing the laws and established customs of the country. The same privileges shall be enjoyed in the dominions of his Britannic Majesty by the citizens of Mexico, under the same conditions.

The citizens and subjects of the contracting parties, in the territories of each other, shall receive and enjoy full and perfect protection for their persons and property, and shall have free and open access to the courts of justice in the said countries, respectively, for the prosecution and defence of their just rights; and they shall be at liberty to employ, in all causes, the advocates, attorneys, or agents of

whatever description, whom they may think proper; and they shall enjoy, in this respect, the same rights and privileges therein as native citizens.

Article IX.

In whatever relates to the succession to personal estates, by will or otherwise, and the disposal of personal property of every sort and denomination, by sale, donation, exchange, or testament, or in any other manner whatsoever, as also the administration of justice, the subjects and citizens of the two contracting parties shall enjoy, in their respective dominions and territories, the same privileges, liberties, and rights, as native subjects; and shall not be charged, in any of these respects, with any higher imposts or duties than those which are paid, or may be paid, by the native subjects or citizens of the power in whose dominions or territories they may be resident.

Article X.

In all that relates to the police of the ports, the lading and unlading of ships, the safety of merchandize, goods, and effects, the

subjects of his Britannic Majesty and the citizens of Mexico, respectively, shall be subject to the local laws and regulations of the dominions and territories in which they may reside. They shall be exempted from all compulsory military service, whether by sea or land. No forced loans shall be levied upon them; nor shall their property be subject to any other charges, requisitions, or taxes, than such as are paid by the native subjects or citizens of the contracting parties in their respective dominions.

Article XI.

It shall be free for each of the two contracting parties to appoint consuls, for the protection of trade, to reside in the dominions and territories of the other party; but before any consul shall act as such, he shall, in the usual form, be approved and admitted by the government to which he is sent; and either of the contracting parties may except from the residence of consuls, such particular places as either of them may judge fit to be excepted. The Mexican diplomatic agents and consuls shall enjoy, in the dominions of his Britannic Majesty, whatever privileges, exceptions, and

immunities are or shall be granted to agents of the same rank belonging to the most favoured nation; and in like manner the diplomatic agents and consuls of his Britannic Majesty in the Mexican territories shall enjoy, according to the strictest reciprocity, whatever privileges, exceptions, and immunities are or may be granted to the Mexican diplomatic agents and consuls in the dominions of his Britannic Majesty.

Article XII.

For the better security of commerce between the subjects of his Britannic Majesty and the citizens of the Mexican States, it is agreed that if, at any time, any interruption of friendly intercourse, or any rupture should unfortunately take place between the two contracting parties, the merchants residing upon the coasts shall be allowed six months, and those of the interior a whole year, to wind up their accounts and dispose of their property; and that a safe conduct shall be given them to embark at the port which they shall themselves select. All those who are established in the respective dominions and territories of the two contracting parties, in the exercise of any trade or special

employment, shall have the privilege of remaining and continuing such trade and employment therein, without any manner of interruption, in full enjoyment of their liberty and property, so long as they behave peaceably, and commit no offence against the laws; and their goods and effects, of whatever description they may be, shall not be liable to seizure or sequestration, or to any other charges or demands than those which may be made upon the like effects or property belonging to the native subjects and citizens of the respective dominions or territories in which such subjects or citizens may reside. In the same case, debts between individuals, public funds, and the shares of companies, shall never be confiscated, sequestrated, or detained.

Article XIII.

The subjects of his Britannic Majesty residing in the Mexican territories shall enjoy, in their houses, persons, and properties, the protection of the government; and continuing in possession of what they now enjoy, they shall not be disturbed, molested, or annoyed in any manner, on account of their religion, provided they respect that of the nation in which

they reside, as well as the constitution, laws, and customs of the country. They shall continue to enjoy to the full the privilege already granted to them, of burying in the places already assigned to that purpose, such subjects of his Britannic Majesty as may die in the Mexican territories; nor shall the funerals and sepulchres of the dead be disturbed in any way, or upon any account. The citizens of Mexico shall enjoy, in all the dominions of his Britannic Majesty, the same protection, and shall be allowed the free exercise of their religion, in public or private, either within their own houses, or in the chapels and places of worship set apart for that purpose.

Article XIV.

The subjects of his Britannic Majesty shall on no account or pretext whatsoever be disturbed or molested in the peaceable possession and exercise of whatever rights, privileges, and immunities they have at any time enjoyed within the limits described and laid down in a convention signed between his said Majesty and the King of Spain, on the 14th of July 1786; whether such rights, privileges, and immunities shall be derived from the stipulations

of the said convention, or from any other concession which may at any time have been made by the King of Spain, or his predecessors, to British subjects and settlers residing and following their lawful occupations within the limits aforesaid; the two contracting parties reserving, however, for some more fitting opportunity, the further arrangements of this article.

Article XV.

The government of Mexico engages to cooperate with his Britannic Majesty for the total abolition of the slave-trade; and to prohibit all persons inhabiting within the territories of Mexico, in the most effectual manner, from taking any share in such trade.

Article XVI.

The two contracting parties reserve to themselves the right of treating and agreeing hereafter, from time to time, upon such other articles as may appear to them to contribute still further to the improvement of their mutual intercourse, and the advancement of the general interests of their respective subjects and citizens: and such articles as may

be so agreed upon shall, when duly ratified, be regarded as forming a part of the present treaty, and shall have the same force as those now contained in it.

Article XVII.

The present treaty shall be ratified, and the ratifications shall be exchanged at London, within the space of six months, or sooner, if possible.

In witness whereof, the respective plenipotentiaries have signed the same, and have affixed thereto their respective seals.

Done at London, the twenty-sixth day of December, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and twenty-six.

(L.S.) William Huskisson.
(L.S.) James L. Morier.

ADDITIONAL ARTICLES.

Article I.

Whereas, in the present state of Mexican shipping, it would not be possible for Mexico to receive the full advantage of the reciprocity established by the Articles V., VI., VII., of

the treaty signed this day, if that part of the VIIth Article which stipulates, that in order to be considered as a Mexican ship, a ship shall actually have been built in Mexico, should be strictly and literally observed, and immediately brought into operation—it is agreed that, for the space of ten years, to be reckoned from the date of the exchange of the ratifications of this treaty, any ships, wheresoever built, being *bonâ fide* the property of, and wholly owned by, one or more citizens of Mexico, and whereof the master, and three-fourths of the mariners at least, are also natural-born citizens of Mexico, or persons domiciliated in Mexico by act of the government, as lawful subjects of Mexico to be certified according to the laws of that country, shall be considered as Mexican ships; his Majesty the King of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland reserving to himself the right, at the end of the said term of ten years, to claim the principle of reciprocal restrictions stipulated for in Article VII. above referred to, if the interests of British navigation shall be found to be prejudiced by the present exception to that reciprocity in favour of Mexican shipping.

ARTICLE II.

It is further agreed that, for the like term of ten years, the stipulations contained in Articles V. and VI. of the present treaty, shall be suspended; and in lieu thereof, it is hereby agreed that, until the expiration of the said term of ten years, British ships entering into the ports of Mexico from the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, or any of his Britannic Majesty's dominions, and all articles the growth, produce, and manufacture of the United Kingdom, or of any of the said dominions, imported in such ships, shall pay no other or higher duties than are or may hereafter be payable, in the said ports, by the ships, and the like goods, the growth, produce, or manufacture of the most favoured nation; and, reciprocally, it is agreed that Mexican ships entering into the ports of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, or any other of his Britannic Majesty's dominions, from any port of the states of Mexico; and all articles the growth, produce, or manufacture of the said states, imported in such ships, shall pay no other or higher duties than are or may hereafter be payable, in the said ports, by the ships and

the like goods, the growth, produce, or manufacture of the most favoured nation; and that no higher duties shall be paid, or bounties or drawbacks allowed, on the exportation of any article the growth, produce, or manufacture, of the dominions of either country, in the ships of the other, than upon the exportation of their like articles in the ships of any other foreign country.

It being understood that, at the end of the said term of ten years, the stipulations of the said Vth and VIth Articles shall, from thenceforward, be in full force between the two countries.

The present additional articles shall have the same force and validity as if they were inserted, word for word, in the treaty signed this day. They shall be ratified, and the ratifications shall be exchanged at the same time.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

COMMERCE OF MEXICO.

Causes of its decline.—Revenues.—Imports and exports.—Average commercial returns for one year from Vera Cruz, Tampico, Matamoras, San Blas, and Mazatlan.—Statement of charges on foreign shipping.—Example of tonnage duty.

THE commerce of this country has been decreasing for the last twenty years—a result attributable to continual revolutionary disturbances, the decrease of the wealth of the people, and the pecuniary embarrassments to which most of the inhabitants have been subjected, by the non-payment of government loans, and by unfortunate investments.

In 1832 and 1833, the revenue of the custom-house amounted to about 12,000,000 dollars, per annum; in 1839, on account of the French blockade, it fell to nearly 3,000,000 dollars; in 1840, it rose again to 7,000,000 dollars; and

in the following year fell to little more than 5,000,000, which is about its present average. This sum may be divided among the different ports as follows:—

	Dollars.
Vera Cruz	3,329,802
Tampico	883,039
Matamoras	312,403
Mazatlan	383,159
Guyamas	55,814
Monterey	96,853
Acapulco	17,182
San Blas	208,845
	5,287,097

This corresponds to about 12,300,000 dollars' value of importation annually, divided (according to an estimate) in the following manner:—

	Dollars.
From England	4,500,000
„ France	3,000,000
„ Hamburgh	1,500,000
„ China	1,000,000
„ United States	800,000
„ Spain	500,000
„ Genoa, and other ports	1,000,000
	12,300,000

The expense to the government, for the collection of this revenue, is about 348,290 dollars.

These statements are exclusive of the contraband trade from the United States by Santa Fé, and by the English and Americans on the sea-coasts.

The exports from the whole republic (chiefly its own productions) may be rated as follows:—

EXPORTS.

		Dollars.
Precious Metals.	Specie, through Vera Cruz	4,000,000
	" " Mazatlan and San Blas	2,500,000
	Silver and gold, through other ports	5,000,000
	Silver, through Tampico	7,000,000
Cochineal, jalap, vanilla, sarsaparilla, and hides		1,000,000
Sundries		500,000
	Total	20,000,000

From this estimate, about 18,500,000 dollars in the precious metals are exported annually from Mexico. The mines produce nearly 22,000,000 dollars of silver, of which it is calculated that 12,000,000 are coined in the seven mints of the republic per annum. There is a difference of about 8,000,000 dollars between the imports and exports—a large proportion—all which is estimated to be covered by smuggling.

THE FOLLOWING IS AN AVERAGE GROSS RETURN OF BRITISH AND FOREIGN TRADE, AT THE PORT OF VERA CRUZ, FOR ONE YEAR:—

ARRIVED.

Nations.	Vessels.	Tons.	Crews.	Invoice value of cargoes in pounds sterling.
				£
English ...	17	2,438	124	468,200
Mexican ...	164	11,480	984	Not to be ascertained.
American ..	35	7,315	235	„
French.....	17	3,764	204	„
Spanish ..	16	2,216	128	„
Hanseatic ..	6	1,015	62	„
Danish.....	5	793	47	„
Belgians ...	3	542	27	„
Prussians...	2	376	23	„
Sardinians..	2	366	24	„
Venezuela ..	1	110	7	„
Total arrived	268	30,416	1,865	

DEPARTED.

Nations.	Vessels.	Tons.	Crews.	Value.
				£
English	18	2,676	138	Unknown.
Mexican	163	11,573	976	„
American.....	34	7,104	226	„
French.....	20	4,493	241	„
Spanish	15	2,107	121	„
Hanseatic.....	6	1,016	62	„
Danish.....	4	612	37	„
Belgians	3	542	27	„
Prussians.....	2	376	23	„
Sardinians.....	5	631	53	„
Venezuelans.....	1	110	7	„
Total demanded	271	31,229	1,911	

GROSS RETURN OF BRITISH AND FOREIGN TRADE AT THE PORT OF TAMPICO, FOR ONE YEAR:—

ARRIVED.

Nations.	Vessels.	Tons.	Crews.	Invoice value of cargoes.
				Dollars.
British	9	923	70	198,000
French	14	1,582	135	84,000
Spanish				
American ...	15	1,626	104	21,000
Bremen	1	160	10	5,000
Total arrived	39	4,291	319	208,000

DEPARTED.

Nations.	Vessels.	Tons.	Crews.	Invoice value of cargoes.
				Dollars.
British	8	829	70	2,910
French	14	1,582	135	25,000*
Spanish				
American.....	15	1,362	99	24,000†
Bremen	1	160	10	500
Total departed	38	3,933	314	52,410

* Chiefly specie. † Including ditto.

GROSS RETURN OF THE TRADE OF THE PORT OF MATAMORAS, FOR ONE YEAR :—

ARRIVED.

Nations.	Vessels.	Tons.	Crews.	Invoice value of cargoes in pounds sterling.
				£
Mexican	18	933	104	13,264
French	1	110	8	5,400
Hanseatic ...	1	83	7	6,000
United States	13	928	84	40,650
Total arrived	33	2,054	203	65,314

DEPARTED.

Nations.	Vessels.	Tons.	Crews.	Invoice value of cargoes in pounds sterling.
				£
Mexican	17	835	95	10,915
French	1	110	8	3,380
Hanseatic ...	1	83	7	Unknown.
United States	11	849	77	49,675
Total departed	30	1,877	187	63,970

GROSS RETURN OF THE BRITISH AND FOREIGN TRADE OF THE PORT OF SAN BLAS, FOR ONE YEAR:—

ARRIVED.

Nations.	Vessels.	Tons.	Crews.	Invoice value of cargo.
				Dollars.
British	4	1,125	59	Unknown.
Danish	1	101	8	135,000
Peruvian	1	61	8	Unknown.
American	1	382	8	110,000
Total arrived	7	1,669	83	245,000

DEPARTED.

Nations.	Vessels.	Tons.	Crews.	Invoice value of cargo.
				Dollars.
British	4	1,125	59	44,000
Danish	1	101	8	8,000
Peruvian	1	61	8	Unknown.
American	1	382	8	7,000
Total departed	7	1,669	83	59,000

GROSS RETURN OF THE BRITISH AND FOREIGN TRADE AT THE PORT OF MAZATLAN, FOR ONE YEAR:—

ARRIVED.

Nations.	Vessels.	Tons.	Crews.	Invoice value of cargoes.
				Dollars.
British	4	1,115	59	274,000
Hamburgh	4	940	51	118,000
American...	1	175	11	Unknown.
Chilian	4	500	37	72,500
Bremen ...	2	390	24	123,000
Danish	1	220	12	60,000
Ecuador ...	1	206	14	24,000
Spanish ...	1	225	14	30,000
Peruvian ...	1	210	16	Unknown.
Swedish ...	2	700	32	202,000
French	1	210	14	40,000
Total arrived including the neighbouring port of San Blas	29	6,560	367	1,188,500

DEPARTED.

Nations.	Vessels.	Tons.	Crews.	Invoice value of cargoes.
				Dollars.
British.....	4	1,165	68	381,500
Hamburgh	5	1,310	69	160,600
American...	2	421	22	250,000
Chilian.....	1	128	9	3,000
Bremen ...	2	390	24	84,000
Danish.....	1	220	12	34,500
Ecuador ...	1	206	14	300,000
Spanish ...	1	225	44	Unknown.
Peruvian ...	1	210	16	„
Swedish ...	2	700	32	50,000
French.....	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown.
Total departed including the neighbouring port of San Blas	27	6,644	363	1,323,100

STATEMENT OF ALL PORT DUES AND OTHER CHARGES ON FOREIGN SHIPPING AT THE PRINCIPAL PORTS OF THE MEXICAN REPUBLIC :—

Ports.	Tonnage duty.	Water dues.	Pilotage.	Ballast Charges.	Bill of Health.	Fee to Port Captain.	Stamps.
	Dollars.	Dollars.	Dollars.	Dollars.	Dollars.	Dollars.	Dollars.
Vera Cruz ...	1½	One-eighth per ton.	38½ each ship.	55 per barge load of 25 tons.	...	10	8½
Tampico	1½	2 per 9 feet measurement.	1 per ton.	...	10	10	
Matamoras ...	1½	...	Gratification to pilot 16½	...	...	6	8
San Blas ... Mazatlan ... Guyamas ..	1½	...	...	...	...	16 and for moving ship each time 4	

EXAMPLE OF CHARGES ON BRITISH SHIPPING BY THE AUTHORITIES OF TAMPICO: BRIG, 125 TONS REGISTER.

PILOTAGE.	Dollars.	cents.	s.	£	s.	d.
125 tons at 1 dollar	125	0	4	25	0	0
Drafts, 9 feet at 2 dollars	18	0	4	3	12	0
To the pilot	6	50	4	1	6	0
Voucher given ...	149	50		29	18	0
TONNAGE DUTY.						
135 tons, Mexican measurement, no voucher given, at 1½ dollar	202	50	4	40	10	0
	352	0	4	70	8	0
BILL OF HEALTH.						
Report in the bill	10	0	4	2	0	0
Captain of the port fees, no voucher	10	0	4	3	0	0
Stamps	8	50	4	1	14	0
Total	380	50		76	2	0

CHAPTER XXXIX.

MEXICAN COMMERCE.—COTTON MANUFACTURE.

Manufactures under the old Spanish Government.—Amount of exports and imports.—Account and statistics of cotton manufacture.—Mexican cotton crops.—Average prices.—Water power.—Puebla.—Climate and raw material.—Table of Mexican weights and measures.—Table of coinage.

THE chief manufactures of Mexico under the Spanish Government up to 1807, were woollens, cottons, gold and silver lace, hats, leather, soap, and earthenware; but the total value of the goods which they produced did not amount to more than 7,000,000 and 8,000,000 dollars annually. Some trifling fabrics of silk were introduced since that time; and the manufactures increased considerably, in consequence of the war with England and the interruption of foreign commerce. Tobacco and gunpowder were royal manufac-

tures and monopolies; and the former brought to the crown a clear revenue of 4,000,000 dollars annually. Mexican artisans were said to be remarkably skilful in works of plate and jewellery; and, like some of the eastern nations, evinced great taste in imitating carved surfaces and ornaments.

The commerce of Mexico with the mother country was carried on almost entirely through the port of Vera Cruz. In time of peace the annual value of the exports was estimated at about 22,000,000 dollars, and the annual value of the imports at nearly 15,000,000 dollars, thus:—

EXPORTS.

	Dollars.
Gold and silver, in coin, bullion, and plate	17,000,000
Cochineal	2,400,000
Sugar	1,300,000
Flour	300,000
Indigo, the produce of Nuevo Espana	280,000
Salt meat and other provisions	100,000
Tanned hides	80,000
Sarsaparilla	90,000
Vanilla	60,000
Jalap	50,000
Logwood	40,000
Pimento	30,000
Total	21,790,000

IMPORTS.

	Dollars.
Bale goods, including woollens, cottons, linens, and silks	9,200,000
Paper	1,000,000
Brandy	1,000,000
Cacao	1,000,000
Quicksilver	650,000
Iron, manufactured and unmanufactured	600,000
Steel	200,000
Wine	700,000
Bees'-wax	300,000
Total	14,600,000

This statement is a mere approximation, and a rather favourable one, founded on the average of several years of peace, at the latter end of the last century.

Loans, for the benefit of the republican government, have been raised by granting permits to merchants (chiefly Englishmen), to introduce cotton-twist into the country. This is a prohibited article—prohibited for the purpose of cherishing the manufacturing establishments of the republic. These merchants have prospered to a considerable extent, as may be seen by the annexed table, compiled from the most authentic sources.

STATISTICS OF COTTON MANUFACTURE.

Departments.	Factories.	Spindles established.	Spindles in erection.	Total.
In Mexico	12	30,156	..	30,156
„ Puebla	21	35,672	12,240	47,912
„ Vera Cruz ..	7	17,860	5,200	23,060
„ Guadalaxara..	5	11,312	6,500	17,812
„ Queretaro	2	7,620	..	7,620
„ Durango	4	2,520	..	2,520
„ Guanajuato ..	1	1,200	..	1,200
„ Sonara	1	1,000	..	1,000
Total	53	107,340	23,940	131,280

At the time when the foregoing account was taken, the number of spindles in three manufacturing establishments, in the department of Durango, were not included; for no definite information had been supplied respecting them. They may be calculated, however, at about 4,000, which, added to the 131,280, will give a grand total of 135,000 at least. The number of looms, also, in the republic is not presented, because *data* have been furnished only in relation to those moved by machinery. A considerable number of hand-looms are in constant occupation throughout the republic.

Cotton Factories.

	Quantity.	Amount.
I.	Lbs.	Dollars.
The cotton factories of the republic consume, daily, with the 107,340 spindles in actual operation	39,755	
Which produce in spun thread, at the rate of one-third of a pound for each spindle	35,780	
Which, converted into mantas and rebosos, have a value of	....	39,358
II.		
The same factories, after the 23,940 spindles in erection are in operation, will consume daily.....	48,622	
Each spindle will produce thread	43,760	
Which, converted as aforesaid, will amount in value to	....	48,037
III.		
The consumption of cotton, in the year of 300 working-days, with 131,280 spindles, will be	14,586,666	
The produce in thread.....	13,138,000	
The produce in manufactured value, as above	....	14,440,800
IV.		
The 131,280 spindles, working day and night, will consume	24,797,332	
Produce in thread	22,317,600	
Produce in manufactured value, as above	....	24,549,360

V.

	Looms.
The 131,280 spindles will occupy (working only by day)	8,753
The same, working day and night	14,880

	Number.
Operatives employed by day	17,000
Do. do. day and night	29,000

VI.

	Quintals of cotton.
It will require for the 131,280 spindles working by day	145,666⅔
The produce of the country, at the utmost, is not more than	50,000
Leaving a deficit of	95,666⅔

	Quintals of cotton.
But if the spindles work day and night, they will require	247,973⅓
Produce of the country, as above	50,000
Leaving a deficit of	197,973⅓

Many persons have been induced by this condition of the market, and the prohibition of importing the raw material, to commence plantations of cotton: it is doubtful whether the habits of the agricultural population are

favourable to their prosperity. Great dislike is evinced in Mexico to adventure in new branches of industry. Had the ancestors of the people worked on cotton plantations, the employment would be contentedly continued; but it is difficult to train the labourer to the new cultivation. Signal failures have occurred on this account, proprietors having been obliged to abandon their establishments, after a considerable outlay of money in land and implements.

The cotton crop of Mexico has been very variable in value. At Tepic, on the west coast, it has been as low as fifteen dollars the quintal; at Vera Cruz, on the east coast, twenty-two dollars and thirty-four dollars; while at Puebla, and in the capital, it has risen to forty dollars, and even forty-eight dollars.

In spite of all the efforts of English capitalists and diplomacy, the government has steadily persevered in fostering the manufactures of the republic, excepting by the occasional allowance of the importation of *twist*. The administration of Santa Anna was energetic in its opposition to the introduction of this article, as well as in its efforts to suppress

the smuggling of English and American fabrics. The manufacturers, therefore, regarded their establishments safe from competition, and their success as assured.

The average price of mantas (cotton cloth), of one *vara* width, used to be twenty-five cents the *vara;* and of *twist,* No. 12 to 22, about seventy-five cents the pound. It was estimated that if cotton fell, in consequence of importations being allowed, or a large crop, to twenty-five dollars the quintal, these articles would be reduced to eighteen and three-quarters cents the *vara* for the first, and to fifty cents the pound for the second. This condition of the market was to prevent all importations from abroad, even aided by smuggling.

There are about 5,000 hand-looms throughout the departments, which will work up all the spun yarn into *mantas* and *rebosos,* as fast as it can be made. Many of these looms are entirely employed in the manufacture of the common rebosos, the consumption of which is very great among the poorer classes. The value of these looms is estimated at between 6,000,000 dollars and 7,000,000 dollars. The number of persons employed in every way in manu-

factures, is supposed to be not much short of 30,000.

The motive power made use of in the factories is water, which is often abundant enough for that purpose, proceeding from small streams falling from the mountains into the neighbouring plains or barrancas. Owing to the scarcity of wood (the only available fuel), and the costliness of its transportation, steam cannot be advantageously produced.

There are several manufactories of cotton balls, or thread, in Mexico; but they are not of very great importance.

Puebla is the Lowell of Mexico: the principal cotton manufactories are located there; and some of them are in very successful operation at the present time, which can be said of very few others. It was by the influence of the manufacturers of Puebla, that the permission granted to foreign merchants for the introduction of cotton-twist, in 1842, was withdrawn.

The high price of the raw material, which ranges from forty to fifty cents per pound (and in such articles as coarse cottons, the raw material constitutes the chief value), is one great obstacle to the success of cotton manufacture

in the republic. Another immense disadvantage is, that all the manufacturer's machinery is transported by land at an enormous cost; and when any portion of it gets out of order, the difficulty and delay of repairing it, and the consequent loss, are incalculable. However tempting to such an investment may be the high prices of the manufactured articles, those high prices are equally tempting to smuggling, in a country with 10,000 miles of frontier and seaboard. There is, perhaps, no other country where the receipts of the custom-house are so little to be relied upon, as to the amount of importations, and where smuggling is carried on to so great an extent; even where goods are regularly imported, innumerable frauds are practised both by and upon the custom-house officers.

The climate of nearly all Mexico is suited to the growth of cotton; and no other reason appears to exist for its very limited production than the characteristic indolence of the people. Several Americans have attempted to extend its culture in this country; but their experiments have almost invariably ended in bankruptcy. A more striking proof of the unconquerable repugnance of the Mexicans to

labour cannot be given than the fact that though short staple cotton sells at from forty to forty-five cents (about 1*s.* 8*d.* to 1*s.* 10*d.* English) per pound, while they have lands and climate well adapted to its culture, yet they never make enough for their own small consumption. Although the whole road from the city of Vera Cruz to the city of Mexico passes through a country inexpressibly picturesque and beautiful, yet the ignorant, idle, and degraded population, and the general absence of cultivation and improvement, produce, in the mind of a spectator, feelings of unmitigated gloom and melancholy: the great mass of the population dozing out their lives with no higher thoughts or purposes than the beasts which perish around them.

It must be remarked, that the estimates forming the bulk of this chapter, compiled as they necessarily are from Mexican statements, appear very favourable; and exhibit the commerce of the republic in this commodity in its most prosperous light.

As several Mexican modes of measurement have been referred to in these pages, it may be well to give a complete copy of the weights and measures now in use in the republic.

Weights and Measures.

The *vara,* of three feet long.
The *foot,* of twelve inches.
The *inch,* of twelve lines.

The weights are :—

The *quintal,* of four arrobas, is equal to 101 lbs. 7 ounces, avoirdupois.
The *arroba,* of twenty-five pounds.
The *pound,* of sixteen ounces, is equal to 1 lb. 4 drachms nearly, avoirdupois.
The *ounce,* of sixteen drachms.
The *drachm,* of thirty-six grains.

Dry Measure. — The *cahiz* contains 12 *fanegas;* and the *fanega,* 12 *celemines.* The latter has many subdivisions. The *fanega* is of the capacity of 3,439 cubic inches, English, and is equal to 1 bushel 599 parts.

Liquid Measure.—The *mozo* of wine contains 16 *arrobas,* or *cantaros;* an *arroba,* 8 *azumbras,* or 32 *quartillos.* A *botta* contains 30 *arrobas.* The *arroba* measures 981 cubic inches, English, and is equal to 4 gallons 245

parts. The *arroba* of oil is equal to 3 gallons 33 parts.

LONG MEASURE.—The *foot* is divided into 12 *pulgadas*, and is equal to 11 inches 128 parts, English. The *palmo* measures 9 *pulgadas*, or $8\frac{1}{3}$ inches: the *vara*, 4 *palmas*, or 33 inches 384 parts.

For purposes of elucidation, in the tables in this volume, the terms dollar and cent have been employed: the former of eight silver rials, equal to about 4*s*. 2*d*. sterling; and the latter one hundred to each dollar. But the following is a table of Mexican coinage, with all the names of coins characteristic of the country.

SILVER COINS.

	£	*s*.	*d*.
The *peso*, or dollar, equal to two *tostons*	0	4	2
The *toston*, equal to two *pesatas*	0	2	1
The *pesata*, equal to two *rials*	0	1	$0\frac{1}{2}$
The *rial*, equal to two *medios*	0	0	$6\frac{1}{4}$
The *medio*, equal to two *currtillas*	0	0	$3\frac{1}{8}$

COPPER COINS.

		£	s.	d.
The *currtilla*	nearly	0	0	1¾
The *claco*, or *jola*	rather over	0	0	0¾
The *grano*		0	0	0½

The gold *doblon*, or *onza* (doubloon) is still in use: its par value is sixteen dollars; but from its conveniency for remittances, in the absence of a paper currency, it commands a high premium, insomuch as to be frequently valued in the north, at from eighteen to twenty dollars.

CHAPTER XL.

COMMERCIAL REGULATIONS, PROHIBITIONS, AND IMPORT DUTIES.

Admission of vessels.—Number of ports open to foreign commerce.—Goods free of duties.—Invoices.—List of prohibited articles.—Exempted articles.—Measurement of goods.—List of duties, in Mexican and British monies, on admitted articles.—Articles of flax, &c.—Wood, &c.—Silks.—Of cotton manufacture.

ARTICLE I.

EVERY vessel, of whatever nation, not at war with Mexico, shall be admitted into such ports of the latter as are open to foreign commerce; and in the act of arriving, the captain, or supercargo, and the crew, as well as the vessel and the cargo, shall be subjected to the regulations prescribed in this decree; to the payment of duties, and to the penalties established by it, or to the measures in force at the time of arriving. Vessels shall therefore be

considered as arrived for all the uses of this tariff immediately on casting anchor in the waters of the port.

Article II.

Vessels proceeding from a foreign port, not excepting national vessels, shall bring no more merchandise than is destined for the Mexican port to which they are bound. The breach of this article shall be punished by confiscating the vessel and the merchandise not destined to the same port.

Article III.

The following ports are open to foreign commerce :—

In the Mexican Gulf.

Sisal.
Campeachy.
Santa Juan Bautista de Tabasco.
Vera Cruz.
Santa Anna de Taumalissas.
Matamoras.
Matagorda.
Velasco.
Galveston.

In the Pacific.

Acapulco.
San Blas.
Mazatlan.

In the Gulf of California.

Guyamas.

In the Sea of Upper California.

Monterey.

ARTICLE IV.

National vessels, conveying foreign or native goods, produce, or other effects, from one port to another, or others in the republic, shall be free from tonnage duties.

ARTICLE V.

The following effects shall be free of all duties in whatsoever vessel they may be imported, viz.:—

1. Card, wire.
2. Exotic or dissected animals.
3. Quicksilver.
4. Mineral coal, until the mines of the republic supply it.

5. Mineralogical and geological collections.
6. Objects of natural history.
7. Designs and models of machines, edifices, monuments, and shipping.
8. Bricks and earth for foundry furnaces.
9. Printing types.
10. Printed books stitched, and manuscript, or printed music, not including, in this exemption, books and other prints used for infant schools, or for devotion, and bound or half-bound books.
11. Topographical and geographical maps and charts.
12. Machines, apparatus, and instruments for scientific purposes.
13. Machines and apparatus for agriculture, mining, and the arts, except *stills* that are not of new invention. (In this and the preceding classification, *machines* are understood to be such works as are composed of various pieces, with the object of putting into play mechanical power; and *apparatus* such works as are composed of various pieces adapted for experiments in physics, and the chemical

affinities of bodies, solid, liquid, gaseous, or imponderable; things that can be sold separately, such as pig-iron, oil, broadcloth, plush, skins, &c., though coming as connected with machinery, shall be subject to the payment of duties.)

14. Ancient and modern coins of all metals, and fac-similes of them in composition or pasteboard.
15. Ship-masts.
16. Exotic plants and their seeds.
17. New vessels of all kinds, destined to become naturalized.
18. Linen rags.
19. Printing ink.

Article VI.

Such articles as are declared free of importation duties, shall also be free of all other duties in their transit through the country.

Article VII.

Although the effects enumerated in the Vth Article shall be free of all duties, they must be entered in the general manifest of the vessel, and bring particular invoices with them.

Goods arriving in the republic without the said documents, and having a consignee, he shall pay only a fine of fifty dollars, but should there be no consignee to take charge of them immediately, the fine shall be levied on said effects, which in this case shall be 100 dollars, and the surplus effects shall be delivered to the respective consuls, that they may hold them at the disposal of whoever may have a right to them.

PROHIBITIONS.

ARTICLE VIII.

The importation of the following effects is prohibited under the penalty of confiscation, and other penalties imposed by this tariff:—

1. Brandy distilled from sugar cane, and any other not from the grape, except gin and rum imported in bottles and jars.
2. Starch.
3. Aniseed and caraway seed.
4. Capers.
5. Sugar of all kinds.
6. Rice.

7. Raw cotton.
8. Indigo.
9. Brass and copper wire of all kinds.
10. Fire-arms, and other arms of all kinds.
11. Sulphur.
12. Boots and half-boots of leather or cloth, with soles for men, women, and children.
13. Buttons of every metal, which are engraved or stamped on the obverse or reverse, with the national or Spanish arms.
14. Coffee.
15. Manufactured wax.
16. Cast nails of all sizes.
17. Copper in pigs, and manufactured into utensils for domestic use.
18. Cumin.
19. Tortoise-shell and horn, manufactured into articles of the latter material only.
20. Epaulettes of all kinds, and metals for military insignia.
21. Cordovan leather of all kinds and qualities.
22. Tin in blocks.
23. All kinds of prints, miniatures, pictures, and figures that are obscene; and in

general every article of workmanship that is obscene, and contrary to religion and good morals.

24. Artificial flowers.
25. All kinds of galloons made of metals or other materials.
26. Chamois leather of all kinds.
27. Woollen cloths of the poorest and coarsest kinds, called "gerga" and "gerguetilla."
28. Wheat flour, except for Yucatan.
29. Every kind, number, and colour of cotton yarn.
30. Every kind, number, and colour of cotton thread.
31. Thread of cotton and linen mixed.
32. Soap of all kinds.
33. Children's toys.
34. Common earthenware, glazed or not glazed, printed or plain.
35. Books, pamphlets, and manuscripts, prohibited by competent authority.
36. Blank books, ruled or not ruled, and invoices, bills of exchange, bills of lading, and forms of custom-house documents, whether printed, engraved, or lithographed.

37. Hog's lard.
38. Molasses.
39. Timber of all kinds, excepting for ship-masts, fine wood for veneers, and that permitted in Tampico and Matamoras by the decree of the 3rd of June 1840, subject to the duties assigned to it.
40. Munitions of war, whether of lead, or any other metal.
41. Playing cards of all kinds.
42. Gold-leaf or tinsel.
43. Broadcloth, not of the first quality.
44. Parchments, except for drawing.
45. Lead in the rough or refined.
46. Gunpowder, except for sporting.
47. Ploughshares of the same form as that used in the country.
48. "Rebosos" (cotton scarfs of the country) of all kinds, and all printed or clouded cloths, imitating them.
49. All kinds of ready-made clothing, including vestments and clerical ornaments.

(The following articles excepted:—

Bands and sashes, with or without fringe. Covered buttons of all kinds.

Leather shirts. Stocking-web, shirts and drawers, whether of silk, cotton, or wool.
Silk scarfs.
Netted or elastic caps, whether silk, cotton, or wool.
Gloves.
Stockings, hats, and suspenders.
Handkerchiefs.
Shawls, with and without linings.)

50. Common salt.
51. Saltpetre.
52. Blankets and coverlets of cotton or woollen.
53. "Sayal" (a fabric made of wool and hair) and sayalette (a coarse woollen stuff, called in some places tanning).
54. Tallow in the rough and refined.
55. Tobacco of all kinds and in every form. It can only be imported by the director of the tobacco monopoly; but private licenses for cigars and rappee will be granted by the government, in which case the duties will be paid at three dollars per pound.
56. Plain and ribbed cloths, bleached and unbleached, made of cotton alone, or

mixed, that do not exceed thirty threads weft and warp on a quarter inch.

57. Unbleached, twilled, and satin-faced cloths, made of cotton only, or mixed, which do not exceed thirty threads weft and warp on a quarter inch.

58. Plain coloured cloths of fast colours made of cotton only, or mixed, which do not exceed twenty-five threads weft and warp on a quarter inch.

(When in this and other parts of the tariff colours are alluded to, it must be understood that the definition includes not only the colours which resist the action of water, soap, and light, but also those which do not resist them; but always retain enough colour to prevent them being used to the prejudice of the bleached and unbleached cottons manufactured in the country.)

59. Plain coloured cloths of fugitive colours, made of cotton only, or mixed, which do not exceed thirty threads under the quarter inch of weft and warp.

60. Salt pork, cured or pressed, and the offal of pigs (in this prohibition are

not included *sausages* and *smoked hams*).

61. Wheat and all other grain.
62. Shoes and slippers.

With respect to manufactured articles of iron and steel, the following are exempted from the said prohibition, and they shall pay the corresponding duties:—

Awl blades.
Fish hooks.
Barrel hoop and hoop iron.
Gimlets.
Braces and bracebits.
Gravers.
Knives proper to the arts.
Strings for musical instruments.
Hand-vices.
Hooks for dentists.
Files.
Saws.
Screws.

Article IX.

The law of the 29th of March 1827 remains in force, inasmuch as the powers given

by it to the states' legislatures for fixing the periods for allowing the importation, are exercised by the "juntas" of the departments.

Article X.

The importation of wheat into the state of Chiapa is permitted in such cases as the "junta" of the department shall determine.

Duties on a valuation to be fixed according to the prices of the articles within the republic.

Article XI.

All goods, produce, and effects included in this tariff shall pay the rates designated in it.

The goods which exceed a vara in width, shall be reduced to square measure, and the rate shall be collected on each square vara; but cloths under a vara wide, which are joined together by a seam or list, are not to be passed as a single piece, otherwise it will be held as a fraud. Those which are not specified in this tariff, shall pay an *ad valorem* duty of thirty per cent.

Article XII.

The vessels, barrels, or bottles, which contain liquids, and the common wrappers of piece

goods, including up to ten varas of inside wrapper, whether of linen, woollen, or cotton stuff not prohibited, will be exempt from duties; but if they exceed this length, the whole shall pay duty according to this tariff, and should they be of a prohibited kind, they shall be confiscated.

Specific duties imposed according to fixed valuations on the basis of thirty per cent. These valuations are those which the goods are worth in Mexico, without any reference to the invoice prices; as shewn in the following table:—

Articles.	Weight, measure, or number.	Import duty, Mexican money.	Import duty, British money.
		dol. c.	£ s. d.
Oil, linseed	lb.	0 12	0 0 6
Do., olive.....	100 lbs.	5 0	1 0 10
Steel.....	do.	2 00	0 8 4
Gin	do.	16 00	3 6 8
Rum	do.	18 00	3 15 0
Brandy from the grape, pure or mixed, without allowance for leakage	do.	12 00	2 10 0
Scented waters, of any herb, flower, or wood, including weight of vessel	lb.	0 16	0 0 8
White lead	do.	0 12	0 0 6

Articles.	Weight, measure, or number.	Import duty, Mexican money.	Import duty, British money.
		dol. c.	£ s. d.
Shelled almonds, sweet and bitter	100 lbs.	6 00	1 5 0
Almonds, in the husk	do.	4 00	0 16 8
Tincal	lb.	0 12½	0 0 6¼
Bad fish, and any other dried or smoked	100 lbs.	4 00	0 16 8
Whalebone, in the rough or manufactured	lb.	0 14	0 0 7
Common glass bottles (empty)	dozen	0 75	0 3 1½
Demi-johns	do.	1 00	0 4 2
Guayaquil, Para, or Island cocoa	100 lbs.	4 00	0 16 8
Cocoa of any other kind	do.	8 00	1 13 4
Paint-boxes, with paints in phials, or catres of from twelve to forty-eight, and without any other addition	dozen	3 33	0 13 11
Do., with paints in flasks or cakes, with other articles	each	1 33	0 5 7
Cinnamon and cassia of all kinds	lb.	1 00	0 4 2
Bees'-wax, bleached and unbleached	100 lbs.	22 00	4 11 8
Virgin-wax	lb.	20 00	4 3 4
Beer and cider, in quart bottles, without allowance for leakage	100 lbs.	8 00	1 13 4
Beer and cider in barrel, without allowing for leakage	do.	4 00	0 16 8
Cloves	lb.	0 50	0 2 1

Articles.	Weight, measure, or number.	Import duty, Mexican money.	Import duty, British money.
		dol. c.	£ s. d.
Eatables, not prohibited, such as hams and sausages, the latter called "chorizos," "chorizones," and "buttifarras"	100 lbs.	8 00	1 13 4
Preserves for eating, including weight of vessel containing them	do.	25 00	5 4 2
Sweetmeats, ditto, ditto	do.	50 00	10 8 4
Pickles, in vinegar and salt	do.	16 00	3 6 8
Manufactured sperm ..	do.	25 00	5 4 2
Sperm in cakes	do.	12 50	2 14 2
Fruits, preserved in brandy or other liquors, weight of vessel included	do.	23 00	3 15 10
Iron of all kinds, not manufactured	quintal	1 50	0 6 3
Do. in plates, wrought and cast, and hoop-iron	do.	3 00	0 12 6
Tin plates of all kinds and sizes	do.	4 50	0 18 9
Books or pamphlets of first lessons or of devotion	100 lbs.	8 00	1 13 4
Fine wood for veneers..	1000sq.ft.	30 00	6 5 0
Building timber, admitted at Tampico and Matamoras, by the decree of the 3rd June 1840.....	do.	10 00	2 1 8

Articles.	Weight, measure, or number.	Import duty, Mexican money.	Import duty, British money.
		dol. c.	£ s. d.
Shingles for roofing, by virtue of the same decree	1,000	2 00	0 8 4
Butter, the weight of vessel included.....	100 lbs.	8 00	1 13 4
Common writing paper	quintal	12 00	2 10 0
Letter paper	do.	16 00	3 6 8
Drawing paper of all sizes, and ruled music paper	do.	16 00	3 6 8
Ruled paper for accounts and other uses, and paper gilt and adorned on the surface	do.	24 00	5 0 0
Paper hangings	do.	24 00	5 0 0
Paper for letter-press ..	do.	6 00	1 5 0
Copying-press paper ..	do.	16 00	3 6 8
Sand-paper of all qualities	do.	7 00	1 9 2
Wrapping-paper	do.	3 00	0 12 6
Raisins, figs, and all other dried fruits	do.	3 00	0 12 6
Pepper, fine and common	100 lbs.	8 00	1 13 4
Cheeses of all kinds, the weight of the wrappers included	do.	4 00	0 16 8
Anchovies, salmon, tunny and any other sea-fish in pickle, salted, dried, or in oil, the weight of the vessel included ..	do.	5 00	1 0 10
Tea, black	lb.	0 50	0 2 1
Do., green	do.	0 75	0 3 1½
Furniture, old and new, all kinds	100 lbs.	15 00	3 2 6

Articles.	Weight, measure, or number.	Import duty, Mexican money.	Import duty, British money.
		dol. c.	£ s. d.
Carriages or open chariots, two wheels	each	25 00	5 4 2
Do., four wheels	do.	100 00	20 16 8
Do., gigs, two wheels..	do.	50 00	10 8 4
Do., small carriages, two seats	do.	150 00	31 5 0
Do., coaches, landaus, two or more seats....	do.	300 00	62 10 0
Do., stages and omnibus	do.	100 00	20 16 8
Glass, or crystals, formed into pieces of all kinds, colours, and sizes, except window-glass, and plate glasses, without allowance for breakage, gross weight	100 lbs.	6 00	1 5 0
Glass-ware of all other kinds, as window and plate.....	do.	10 00	2 1 8
Window-glasses of all numbers and colours, without any allowance for breakage, gross weight	do.	10 00	2 1 8
Vinegar	do.	3 00	0 13 4
White wines of all kinds, in barrel, without allowance for leakage..	do.	2 50	0 10 5
Do. do., in bottle, do. do.	do.	3 25	0 13 6½
Red do., in barrels, do. do.	do.	2 25	0 9 4½
Do. do., in bottle, do. do.	do.	3 00	0 12 6

Articles.	Weight, measure, or number.	Import duty, Mexican money.	Import duty, British money.
		dol. c.	£ s. d.
ARTICLES OF FLAX, HEMP, TOW, AND GRASS.			
Hemp	quintal	2 00	0 8 4
Flax	do.	3 00	0 12 6
Carpeting of hemp or tow alone, at and under a vara wide ...	vara	0 12½	0 0 6¼
Sheetings of flax or hemp, or imitations of them, at and under a vara wide	do.	0 07	0 0 3½
Socks and half-stockings of all colours	dozen	0 75	0 3 1½
Tapes of all kinds and colours	lb.	0 60	0 2 6
Gloves of all sizes and colours	dozen	0 75	0 3 1½
Linen thread of all kinds, numbers, and colours	lb.	0 75	0 3 1½
Twine of all kinds	100 lbs.	4 00	0 16 8
Bleached, unbleached, and coloured cloths of hemp or hemp-tow, at and under a vara wide	vara	0 06	0 0 3
Bleached and unbleached plain cloths, of flax, flax-tow, or grass, at and under a vara wide	do.	0 08	0 0 4
Bleached and unbleached more than thirty-six threads to the quarter-inch	do.	0 09	0 0 4½

Articles.	Weight, measure, or number.	Import duty, Mexican money.	Import duty, British money.
		dol. c.	£ s. d.
Plain cloths, made of the last mentioned materials, painted, striped, or shaded, at and under a vara wide	vara	0 09	0 0 4½
Bleached, unbleached, or coloured cloths figured, twilled, or damasked, at and under a vara wide	do.	0 11	0 0 6
Bleached, unbleached, and coloured cloths, embroidered, or with open work, at and under a vara wide	do.	0 18	0 0 9
Men's and women's stockings of all kinds and colours	dozen	1 50	0 6 3
Children's do. do.....	do.	0 50	0 2 1
Plain, white, or coloured handkerchiefs, at and under a vara wide ..	do.	1 50	0 6 3
ARTICLES OF WOOL, HAIR, FEATHERS, AND FURS.			
Wool, raw	100 lbs.	4 00	0 16 8
Floor carpets and "tripe" of all kinds, at and under a vara wide	vara	0 75	0 3 1½
Socks and half-stockings of all colours	dozen	0 75	0 3 1½

Articles.	Weight, measure, or number.	Import duty, Mexican money.	Import duty, British money.
		dol. c.	£ s. d.
Stocking-webs, shirt, and drawers	each	0 50	0 2 1
Twilled cassimere of all kinds and colours, at and under a vara	vara	0 75	0 3 1½
Worsted thread of all kinds and colours....	lb.	0 60	0 2 6
Netted caps	dozen	3 00	0 12 6
Gloves of all sizes and colours	do.	0 75	0 3 1½
Men's and women's stockings of all kinds and colours	do.	1 50	0 6 3
Children's do. do.	do.	0 50	0 2 1
Plain and fancy broadcloths of all colours, a vara wide.....	vara	1 00	0 4 2
Handkerchiefs, plain, wrought, and twilled, of all colours, at and under a vara wide, exclusive of the fringe..	do.	0 20	0 0 10
White and coloured plain cloths, at and under a vara wide.....	do.	0 12½	0 0 6¼
Cloths of all colours, worked, damasked, crossed, striped, and twilled, at and under a vara wide	do.	0 15	0 0 7½

Articles.	Weight, measure, or number.	Import duty, Mexican money.	Import duty, British money.
		dol. c.	£ s. d.
SILKS.			
Blond, and other lace, and netting of all kinds and colours, plain and embroidered	lb.	12 00	2 10 0
Umbrellas and parasols of all sizes	each	1 25	0 5 2½
Unmanufactured silk of all qualities	lb.	1 00	0 4 2
Untwisted silk, or "quina," of all qualities and colours	do.	2 00	0 8 4
Thrown silk, sewing silk, and chinelle for embroidering, of all qualities and colours	do.	3 00	0 12 6
Plain and fancy silks of all fabrics, composed of silk only, whatever quality or name	do.	3 00	0 12 6
COTTON MANUFACTURE.			
Socks and half-stockings	dozen	0 80	0 3 4
Stocking-web, shirts, and drawers	each	0 50	0 2 1
White and coloured tapes	lb.	0 75	0 3 1½
Netted caps	dozen	3 00	0 12 6
Gloves of all sizes and colours	do.	0 75	0 3 1½

Articles.	Weight, measure, or number.	Import duty, Mexican money.	Import duty British money.
		dol. c.	£ s. d.
Bleached and unbleached cloths, ribbed and plain, exceeding thirty threads weft and warp on the quarter-inch, at and under a vara wide.....	vara	0 15	0 0 7½
Unbleached, twilled, or satin cloths, exceeding thirty threads weft and warp on the quarter-inch, at and under a vara wide	do.	0 15	0 0 7½
Plain cloths, unbleached or striped, of fugitive colours, exceeding thirty threads on the quarter-inch.....	do.	0 15	0 0 7½
White, twilled, or satin cloths, with or without embossing, raised face, or cut like velvet, at and under a vara wide	do.	0 15	0 0 7½
Plain cloths, printed or dyed, striped or shaded, of fast colours, from twenty-six threads, weft and warp on the quarter-inch, at and under a vara wide....	do.	0 10	0 0 5
Twilled, and all other cloths, not plain, printed, and dyed	do.	0 10	0 0 5

Articles.	Weight, measure, or number.	Import duty, Mexican money.	Import duty, British money.
		dol. c.	£ s. d.
Thread, cotton, or of cotton and wool, including the paper packages	lb.	0 50	0 2 1
Men's and women's stockings of all qualities and colours	dozen	1 50	0 6 3
Children's do.	do.	0 50	0 2 1
Muslins, linos, gauzes, and other white and coloured cotton cloths, of an open texture, fancy and plain, without regard to the number of threads, at and under a vara wide ..	do.	0 12½	0 0 6½
Printed, striped, and checked handkerchiefs of fast colours, from twenty-six threads on the quarter-inch, at and under a vara wide	do.	0 12½	0 0 6½
Plain white handkerchiefs, with white or coloured borders, exceeding thirty threads on the quarter-inch, at and under a vara wide.....	each	0 09	0 0 4½
White handkerchiefs, twilled, or with raised stripes or checks, at and under a vara wide	do.	0 11	0 0 5½

Articles.	Weight, measure, or number.	Import duty, Mexican money.	Import duty, British money.
		dol. c.	£ s. d.
White handkerchiefs, with borders or corners embroidered or with open work, at and under a vara wide.....	each	0 14	0 0 7
White and coloured muslin handkerchiefs, without regard to number of threads, at and under a vara wide	do.	0 16	0 0 8
Lace of cotton, including boxes, &c.	lb.	2 00	0 8 4

All handkerchiefs which exceed a square vara, shall be subject to pay duties, according to their kind, for the number of square varas they contain.

All the cloths included in this classification, although they may have a mixture of flax, hemp, grass, or tow, or any of them, shall pay the rate and duty as pure cotton, according to the description of cloth they are.

CHAPTER XLI.

PASSPORTS AND PENALTIES.

Rules for register of passengers.—Written report of foreigners.—Restrictions on entering the country.—Carta de Seguridad, or card of safety.—Penalties on violating regulations for shipment.—Penalties on false money.

THE master of any vessel coming from a foreign port, shall, immediately on his arrival in any of the ports of the republic, declare in writing to the chief of the maritime custom-house, the number of passengers he has on board, the country to which they belong, their trade or occupation, and the place where they embarked. The penalty for neglecting to comply with this regulation, or the making a false statement, is 100 dollars; and an additional fine of 20 dollars for each passenger omitted in the report. The vessel may be detained until the penalty be paid. Seamen, whose names are entered on the roll, are not considered as passengers.

Every foreigner shall, before he disembarks, declare his name, age, stature, place of birth, from whence he came, his destination, the object of his voyage, and his profession; which report, when made by the head of a family, will be sufficient for the women and children thereof.

The declaration above must be in writing, and signed by the person making the same.

This formality being complied with, the collector shall give to the foreigner a permit to disembark; subject, however, to the following rules:—

1. That no Spaniard, or subject of the Spanish government, shall enter the republic.

2. That any foreigner provided with a passport from the general government, may disembark.

3. That the citizens of the new States of America, and the subjects of nations who have agents officially accredited to the republic, may also land, having passports granted, or examined by any Mexican agent at the place of embarkation, or on security of their consul in the port where they may arrive, or on that of any Mexican citizen.

The subjects of nations who are not com-

prehended in the foregoing paragraph, shall only be permitted to land with a passport of the general government, or with one granted or examined by any Mexican agent residing in a foreign country.

The foreigner to whom such permit is granted, must, within twenty-four hours after having landed, present himself to the civil authority of the port.

Any foreigner permitted to introduce himself into the republic as aforesaid, shall, within one month thereafter, solicit of the supreme government a *carta de seguridad* (card of safety), to remain in, and pass through the same for the period of one year; in order to obtain which, a certificate will be required from the officially accredited agent of the applicant, stating that he is a subject or citizen of the nation he represents, as also his occupation or profession.

Every foreigner, whatever his passport may be, must present himself to the civil authority of the place where he may have resided more than eight days; and, also, whenever he may change his place of residence; non-compliance with this provision subjects the party to a fine of twenty dollars.

Foreigners introduced and established agreeably to the regulations herein prescribed, shall be under the protection of the laws, and enjoy the same civil rights that are conceded by said laws to Mexican citizens, with the exception of acquiring real estates, which can only be held by citizens.*

Any foreigner who shall disembark and introduce himself into the territory of the republic, contrary to the provisions of this decree, shall be expelled therefrom. As, also, any foreigner who shall be adjudged guilty of having used, for the purpose of his disembarkation, any document belonging to another, or for having suppressed or falsified any of the statements required, or for having counterfeited or altered any passport or *carta de seguridad.*

Every foreigner wishing to leave the republic must make application for the proper passport, either to the general government, or the civil authority of the state in which he may be.

* This exception does not extend to lands belonging to mining establishments, in which aliens may hold shares. Aliens may purchase and hold land by permission of the general government for federal territory, or of the state governments for state territory.

Penalties.

If any foreign vessel, of whatever burden or form, or wherever she may have come from, be found loading or unloading goods of any kind at any coast, river, harbour, bay, or other place, not pointed out by the tariff as a port for foreign vessels, she shall for this alone be confiscated, together with the cargo and all that belongs to her. The commander of the said vessel shall be fined from 500 to 3,000 dollars, according to the value of the cargo, and shall be condemned besides to from six to five years of labour and banishment. All those who knowingly aid or protect the loading of said vessels, or the carriage of goods by land, introduced into, or carried out of places described by decree, shall suffer the following fines and punishments, viz.:—the owner, or his deputy, of the carts, beasts of burden, and everything used in the transport of the effects, and the persons who receive the goods, as well as he who delivers, deposits, takes charge of, or conceals them, shall all undergo the same penalties and punishments as the captain or supercargo of the vessel, and the other shall be punished by paying a tenth part of the fine,

and suffering a tenth of the punishment imposed on the principals.

National vessels shall be liable to the same penalties on coming from a foreign port, and entering any of those not open to foreign commerce, if found shipping any effects whatever for a foreign country, and when they are found loading or unloading any kind of goods whatever, at ports or places not open to foreign commerce, or to the coasting trade.

All merchandise found in ports open to foreign commerce, or the coasting trade, which has been introduced, or be in the act of being introduced, without observing any of the instructions or regulations issued by the government, shall be confiscated, together with all the boats, canoes, and vessels of every class.

Should the goods be those of which the government has a monopoly, the importers and exporters who introduce them in another port or coast of the republic, together with him who delivers and receives them, shall suffer, besides the confiscation of the goods, vessels, cars, beasts for riding or of burden, with harnesses, equipments, and arms, a fine of double the value of the monopolized goods, rated at the price of the monopoly at

the respective places, and in default of payment, shall be condemned to banishment for the term of from two to eight years.

Should false money, whatever the metal may be, be found, besides the confiscation of everything mentioned in the preceding clause, and besides a fine, equal to what the false money would represent, if legal, the offender shall be punished with all the penalties inflicted by the law on coiners; should the offender be unable to pay the fine, the metal shall be melted, and held, together with all the property that may have been recovered, for the benefit of the informer, and those who seized it.

CONCLUDING CHAPTER.

Striking features of the country.—Motives for exposition of facts.—Physical weakness of the people.—Want of mental energy.—Isolation and prohibitory duties.—House and land rents.—Financial difficulties.—Various classes.—State of the fine arts.—The army, trade, law, and medicine.—Social qualities.—Literature, language, and education.—Political future.

THE intelligent reader will most likely conclude, on perusal of this work, that the principal features of the country of Mexico—whether it be the wild beauty and variety of its natural scenery, the indolence and abject poverty of its chief population, or the splendour and influence of its church establishment—are all marked by redundancy and excess. This is the fact; and it may not be amiss to give, in the form of a summary, what appear to be the causes of the present state of the republic, together with the existing grounds for hope and promise in the future.

The Author would wish to observe that he

has been totally uninfluenced by party bias or feeling, in his remarks on the Mexican priesthood and their usages, in Chapters VIII., IX., and X., of Volume I. Any reader in a position to judge impartially of the subject, must own, on examination, that nothing but the truth has been told. The priests in Mexico are less prepared by education for their holy office, than are the humblest of their class in Europe; in a partially civilized country like the one in question, they have little accountability, and are under few restraints; and, under such circumstances, greater temptations, both to rapacity and licentiousness, are held out to them. In the chapters alluded to, it was the writer's object, honestly and truthfully to expose the workings of a system, in a land where nefarious "priestly doings" need assume no disguise; and therefore any attempt to conceal the injurious nature of such an ecclesiastical policy, or the vice and ignorance of its ministers, would have been criminal: for to them is undeniably attributable much of the suffering and degradation pressing so heavily upon the whole community. The facts adduced are their own best interpreters, and need no comment.

There is doubtless a great affinity between the races of Mexican Indians (the native Aztecs) and the Arabian tribes; there yet remains much of the Eastern type in the aspect of the people—their diminutive figures, their aversion to labour, their fiery irritable tempers, and their flowing and often poetical redundancy of language. The physical weakness of the modern Mexicans is extreme; insomuch that the Indian men are not personally stronger, on the average, than the women of many climes: in the war with America the feebleness of the Mexicans was so apparent, that their enemies often vanquished them at the rate of one against four or five.

Their want of mental energy, also, corresponds with their bodily weakness: they are totally unfit for enterprise of any sort; and are, also, deficient in courage and perseverance. New kinds of employment, whether manufacturing or agricultural, are regarded with suspicion, and shunned as innovations; even new implements of labour are rejected as hazardous and unnecessary; while the luxurious climate and fertility of soil, by lessening the demand for labour, tend still further to enervate the population. To this mental and

physical debility is owing much of the backward and unprosperous state of commerce and agriculture.

I have before alluded to the unfortunate geographical isolation of the country; not content with being divided from the rest of the world by seas, mountains, and deserts, however, the Mexicans have further increased these barriers, by continually adopting an oppressive and injuriously restrictive commercial policy. The prohibitory tariff preceding this chapter, will shew how miserably confined are the notions of successive Mexican legislatures, on this subject. If foreign goods are landed at all on the shores of the republic, it is under every possible discouragement and disadvantage; and thus less capital is circulated throughout the nation, fewer profitable investments are presented to the wealthy, and the prices paid by the poor population for necessary articles are ruinous and exorbitant.

In addition to the want of capital and labour, rents of houses and land in the cities of Mexico are enormously high; insomuch that none but the very wealthy can reside in good houses and decent neighbourhoods. This tends still further to increase the separation of

rich and poor: the respectable "middle class" has scarcely any influential existence in this republic.

The financial difficulties of the government have frequently been most urgent; and it is a long period since the state exchequer was in a flourishing or satisfactory state. So heavily have these embarrassments weighed upon the presidents and legislature of the country, that even the most upright and vigorous ruler has possessed comparatively little power for good; and there is at present but slight probability of increased prosperity.

It has been seen in the course of the foregoing chapters, that the number of mendicants and robbers in the republic is very great, and that their solicitations are most obtrusive and audacious; that the annual statistics of crime and imprisonment are alarming, considering the somewhat scanty population; that there are no poor-houses or asylums for the reception of the destitute and incapable poor; and that the laws are frequently of little avail for the protection of life and property, or for the prevention of smuggling on the sea-coasts.

The condition of Indian labourers, both at

the mines and farming haciendas—the little encouragement they have to labour, and the severe treatment they receive at the hands of their employers—have also been alluded to: and the Author would be gratified could his remarks prove serviceable to them, by attracting attention to the subject; for there is a very wide field for exertion in ameliorating their helpless and degraded state.

The fine arts, as will have been observed in the account of the Art Academy, are at a low ebb in Mexico; but considerable ability exists in the inhabitants (devoid, it is true, of high cultivation) for the art of carving small figures and ornamental work. Scientific music also is in a backward state, though great taste is often evinced in producing harmonies by the ear, and richly-toned voices are very common.

The manner of recruiting the army has been described, with the frauds often practised by officers, the uncertain pay of the soldiers, and the exaggeration of numbers continually made at head-quarters. The insolence, amusing indolence, and *sang froid*, so often observable in Mexican tradesmen and shopkeepers, have also been glanced at in former chapters.

Reputable and prosperous physicians are not wanting in the better neighbourhoods of Mexican cities, and great skill and attention are often evinced by them; but it must be said that in poor and remote districts much suffering is caused by the difficulty of obtaining good medical aid, and by the ignorance or carelessness of practitioners. Numbers perish through want of requisite care and medicine. Lawyers abound in the republic, and, both at the mining establishments and country estates, their services are in frequent requisition.

The state of society in this country — although compliments are profuse, and personal decorations expensive and elaborate—is susceptible of much greater polish and refinement. Too often, as in more favoured communities, external show, glitter, and ceremony, are studied in place of true politeness of feeling and consideration for others. Inexpensive social entertainments are not sufficiently popular; and female influence is held in far too little esteem.

The numerous good points in Mexican character of the better class, have been dwelt upon elsewhere,—their hospitality, sincerity, courtesy, and bravery, as also their jealousies

and weaknesses, together with the dangerous and repulsive qualities of the lowest grades of the population.

It is needless again to refer to the almost matchless variety and beauty of the scenery of Mexico, or the richness of its mineral and vegetable productions; inasmuch as some idea of these may have been gathered, it is hoped, from several of the preceding chapters.

As may be conjectured, literature, properly speaking, has scarcely an existence in this country. There are a few newspapers, but they are of a very inferior grade, and do but repeat the information received from one paper to another, in turn. Slender rows of Spanish books may occasionally be perceived on the shelves of the wealthy classes; but, to the vast proportion of the community, books are literally "sealed." A show of learning is kept up at the convents of the republic, and the holy fathers sometimes profess a fondness for books and authors; but their knowledge is almost universally shallow, and their attachment is generally assumed.

The language spoken in Mexico is the Spanish; it is for the most part uttered fluently and melodiously among the upper

classes (who are of Spanish descent); while among the lower orders, great attachment is evinced towards old Indian, or Aztec, words and phrases, and this fondness often influences both their ideas and pronunciation. There is little or no slang, or conventional abbreviation, in use in the republic; the speech of the people, on the contrary, inclining to the elaborate and redundant; the vowels are usually dwelt upon in pronunciation, and pronounced in a full and musical manner.

The subject of education is one of the most promising of future good, presented by the republic at the present time. As has been before observed, there are subscription Lancasterian Associations in various parts of the country, where children are instructed gratis, with evening schools for adults. There are also government establishments for the tuition of the young of both sexes, in numerous country departments; these schools are inspected and supported under the direction of the town councils, where the children are furnished with books without charge.

The capital contains four collegiate establishments; and there is a Government normal school for the instruction of soldiers

in the army. It is to be feared that the Mexican priesthood are, privately, even more averse to the progress of knowledge, than the old Spanish ecclesiastics; yet despite all obstacles and opposition, there is good reason to believe that education will be more generally diffused among the people, from year to year; and that it will become the means of producing the noblest and most beneficial changes throughout this degraded country.

It appears highly probable, that the political future of Mexico may be influenced in no ordinary degree, by the government of the United States of America. Since the war between the two countries, American habits and opinions have steadily gained ground; the Mexican republic adopting the United States for its model in many particulars. There are not wanting politicians in the United States, who already "realize," in imagination, the Mexican territories as brilliant appendages to their own; nor are others unfrequently met with, who complacently regard Mexico as lying "in their path of empire."

However this may result, any movement, having the effect of releasing the community from the oppressive bondage of superstition—

of enlightening and instructing the grossly ignorant—of infusing new energy into the indolent and enervated—of lessening the terrible amount of crime at present prevailing—and of placing truth and religion in a purer and more elevated light, would confer a benefit, not on the country of Mexico alone, but on mankind.

THE END.

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